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In a preceding article there was presented the report of an experiment in carrying on remedial work in reading with small groups of pupils through the agency of a "special help" teacher. The benefits derived from this plan were limited to the comparatively few "backward" pupils who received instruction. The value of this work suggested the desirability of using its essential features in regular classroom teaching in reading. The present article discusses the methods and materials used in the attempt to individualize classroom teaching in reading so that the pupils could be given remedial treatment according to their particular needs.

One of the most difficult things to overcome in this experiment was the inertia of traditional methods of classroom instruction. It was necessary to convert teachers to a belief in the efficacy of the new procedure. This conversion did not come through any sudden "revival," but was a matter of steady growth. Teachers felt at first that it was necessary to carry on the new type of reading instruction in addition to their regular reading work. One of the best means of winning teachers to this new method was by demonstration teaching. A teacher who had had special training in teaching reading—one who was conversant with diagnostic methods and who had worked out a great deal of remedial material—presented demonstration lessons in various classrooms for one or two weeks at a time, handling the whole room as well as carrying on the reading instruction. This gave the teachers confidence in the practicability of the plan. The work done with backward pupils during the preceding year proved a splendid advertisement, for many of the teachers had in their regular classes pupils who had been termed "backward" the year before.

The next step was to acquaint teachers with methods of diagnosing reading defects. The Gray Oral and Silent Reading Tests were used for this purpose. A teacher who had given these tests to several hundred children demonstrated the technique of applying them. She showed teachers how to discover, classify, and record the errors made by pupils. With this help teachers were able to give these tests to their children. The giving of them served to emphasize the wide variation in reading ability among the pupils of a given grade together with the most prominent causes for this variation. The results obtained demonstrated that there were very few reading defects common to all the pupils of a class, that pupils could be classified into smaller groups according to the defects noted, and that these smaller groups did not remain constant in their membership.

Teachers became more observing. Of their own accord they began to note the defects of pupils in oral and silent reading in the regular classes. This led them to see the necessity of keeping individual records of such errors. A "reading progress" book with several pages for each pupil was the next step. In this book was recorded the teacher's diagnosis of each pupil's reading ability, his reading rate taken at stated intervals, the various kinds of remedial lessons given to him, and the results achieved. Pupils became interested in these records and as a result of this interest there developed pupils' progress books with a record of growth from day to day along various lines. A pupil's progress book contained his reading rates in the minute speed tests given throughout the city at stated intervals, his scores in standard tests compared with standard and class scores, his reading defects, and the date each was eliminated, the names of the books he read during the year, and a list of the new words which he had learned to use during the year. Teachers saw the value of these records. By means of them, the comparative worth of various kinds of remedial treatment was determined. A study of these returns indicated to the teachers the place where the law of diminishing returns became operative. They found at one time that most of the remedial work brought about an increase in speed and that ability to comprehend did not show a proportionate growth. Thus the
records served as a check upon their methods and caused them to vary the treatment from time to time.

The making of proper assignments was one of the first matters to be taken up with the teachers. They were asked to vary the kind of assignment from day to day so as to center attention upon specific ends in view, such as general reproduction, selection of the main idea in each paragraph, determining the relative importance of sentences, the organization of the material in a selection, phrase analysis, etc., in turn. On one day the assignment was a series of thought questions which required a careful reading of the lesson in search of suggestive information relating to the questions. Another type of assignment required pupils to prepare questions to bring out the chief content of the selection. Other pupils in the class were asked to answer these questions at the beginning of the recitation. At other times pupils were instructed to select from the reading lesson all of the time expressions, expressions of place, descriptive phrases, etc., and to arrange them in separate columns. At still other times the validity of the statements made in the selection was challenged by the teacher. Pupils were asked to read the selection to find evidence supporting or disproving the challenge.

A TYPICAL CLASSROOM PROCEDURE

The classroom procedure under this method of teaching reading varied from day to day. The following statement gives a true picture of the work going on in a third grade on a given day.

The class consisted of three second-grade pupils, seven third-grade pupils, and one fourth-grade pupil. Subject promotion and demotion in the elementary grades make this arrangement possible. The teacher passed out to three pupils cardboard boxes, each containing several hundred phrases which had been typed on narrow strips about one-half inch by two inches in size and mounted on manila paper. These strips contained time phrases, place phrases, words in a series, prepositional phrases, infinitive phrases, etc. The source and the value of these phrases are explained elsewhere. The pupils sorted and classified them.

One boy wrote a reproduction of a paragraph which he had read. This paragraph had been cut out of an old discarded
reader and mounted upon cardboard. The boy had been reproducing a series of these paragraphs from day to day, each one more difficult than the preceding one. After he had read the paragraph, he laid it aside and wrote a reproduction. Then he turned to the opposite side of the cardboard upon which was written a set of questions based upon the paragraph. He re-read the paragraph in order to answer these questions. Then he wrote a second reproduction. The score for each was secured by counting the number of words essential in giving the thought. A record of this was kept by both teacher and pupil.

Three pupils had selections from old readers, children's magazines, and school newspapers, mounted upon cardboard. On the back of each cardboard was a set of questions. The pupils searched the selections for answers to the specific questions. These selections are graded in difficulty. The answers to the questions were written out, scored by the teacher, and recorded in progress books.

Two pupils read books selected from the room library. They were in need of no remedial work and were permitted to read silently during the whole period. Later they reported to the teacher and to the class during a language exercise. In this report they told the story up to the part which they considered the most interesting, and then read this part to the class.

While the members of the class were engaged in various reading assignments, the teacher was working at her desk with two pupils. She was giving them drill with "flash" phrases in order to increase their span of recognition. The phrases had been taken from a selection which they now read. In this reading special emphasis was placed upon phrasing. These pupils passed to their seats after their reading test and were given pages taken from old readers and magazines. They were asked to draw vertical lines dividing each sentence into its natural phrasing. At different times during the reading period any given group of pupils received remedial instruction from the teacher and carried on the work indicated above at their seats.

Another group of pupils then passed to the teacher's desk. They were given work in articulation. This is a local problem due to the fact that fully 75 per cent of the pupils are of
Scandinavian parentage, and many of them hear no English spoken in the home.

The pupils in the next group to receive special attention had been having difficulty in comprehension, because of overlooking or miscalling small but meaningful words. They were given drill in the silent reading of sentences like the following: "Place the book on the table." "Place the book under the table." "Place the book over the table."

The pupils followed the directions and attention was called to the change in meaning caused by the alteration of a single word.

**TYPES OF REMEDIAL WORK FOR THE IMPROVEMENT OF RATE OF SILENT READING**

One of the most frequent defects which was discovered affecting rate of silent reading was inability to see more than one word at a time. A common cause of this defect is the lack of knowledge of mechanics. This resulted in "periods of confusion" in reading. Independence in reading was secured by means of the teaching of phonics.

Many teachers, following the phonic courses outlined in various reading manuals, require pupils to learn hundreds of phonograms, building up lists of words from each "family" as it is taught. Practically two-thirds of all phonograms commonly taught would not need to be learned separately by the pupils since the words containing them can be unlocked with the help of the ten phonetic rules of pronunciation.1

A pupil whose lack of knowledge of mechanics was interfering with his rate in silent reading was taught the ten phonetic rules of pronunciation. Words such as "enough," "sleigh" "sang," "stir," "blow," "bright," "small," etc., justified the study of phonograms such as "ough," "eigh," "ang," "ir," "ow," "ight," and "all." It was not necessary, however, to take these elements out of the words containing them in order to teach them. Pupils discovered, after pronouncing a list of words such as "weigh," "sleigh," "neighbor," "weighed," "eight," "weighing," "freight," that


2 See *Elementary School Journal*, XX (June, 1920), 787.
these words have a common element and were able to underline that element and pronounce additional words containing it without any drill upon separate phonograms. Pupils saw the common element "ock" in "rock," "cock," and "flock." With better comprehension as the goal in reading teaching, a drill of meaningless letter combinations, such as "ow," "or," "ing," and "ock," has little value. Words such as "there," "come," "house," "beautiful," etc., were taught as sight words since pupils meet only a few words similar to them in their entire reading. It was not considered profitable to drill upon word elements from which less than four words could be studied.

The following seat-work exercise was given pupils to overcome "periods of confusion." Ten sheets of paper were fastened together. At the top of each was written one of the ten phonetic rules. In all study work the pupils watched for words containing these rules. As they found them, they listed these words on the pages where they belonged. Pupils were encouraged to look in newspapers, magazines, Sunday-school papers, etc., for these words also.

Many times, however, pupils who had little or no trouble with mechanics were very slow readers on account of their short span of recognition. The common practice in teaching reading is largely responsible for this defect. The dwelling upon words by first-grade teachers in beginning reading and the word drills so frequently used by teachers in all grades lead pupils to use the word rather than the phrase as the unit in silent reading. The first-grade teacher aided in preventing this defect by presenting new words in sentences. This trained the pupil from the beginning in the recognition of large units. Instead of the word drills so common in the first half of the first year the use of words in new relations proved a more effective form of drill.

When the pupils had attained first-grade reading ability, teachers eliminated word drills as such from the reading exercise and substituted lists of phrases. These phrases were taken directly from the lesson and contained the difficult words which needed special drill. This phrase drill served a triple purpose. It trained pupils to recognize word groups rather than single
words, at the same time giving drill upon the pronunciation and the meaning of difficult words usually placed upon the board in word lists.

Children in grades above the first who are not seriously backward in reading receive much more benefit from extensive silent reading of simple interesting material than they do from endless hours of dull, uninteresting work such as the sorting of letter cards or the building of words or sentences with these cards. Pupils read more rapidly when reading intensely interesting, simple selections, for there is something about such stories which makes them want to get to the end. There is little danger of careless, thoughtless reading on the part of pupils if a teacher gives them project reading. With simple material and interesting problems they wish to get as much material as they can. The problems act as a check upon accuracy.

Pupils who use lip movement in their silent reading are using the word as a unit in their reading. The elimination of lip movement was encouraged from the start during study periods when children were reading silently. An effective device was the posting of an "honor list" bearing the names of all children who were able to read silently without lip movement.

The following of lines with the finger also slows up a pupil's rate of reading. The attention of such pupils was called to this defect whenever the teacher noticed it. They were commended at times when they were attempting to read without this guide.

Rapid phrase drills were given which were short, definite, and varied. Five minutes gave time to drill upon from ten to twenty phrases. These phrases did not contain unusual or uncommon words. A distinction was made between the phrase drill given in place of the old-fashioned word drill and the phrase drill given for speed. This distinction was made by calling the former "phrase drill" and the latter "flash drill."

There are certain groupings of words such as "once upon a time," "an old woman," etc., which occur many times in stories which the children read. These phrases should be recognized at a glance by pupils, just as single words are recognized. These are the phrases which should be taken in with one eye fixation and should therefore constitute the flash drill.
This drill was conducted in several ways. The phrases were placed on the board before school began and concealed by a shade or roller map until the teacher wished to use them. A rapid drill was then given, beginning at the bottom of the list and exposing each phrase for one second.

**TABLE I**

**Record of Progress of a Pupil in Reading Phrases**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lesson . . . .</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
<th>10</th>
<th>11</th>
<th>12</th>
<th>13</th>
<th>14</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book I . . . .</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book II . . .</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book III . . .</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book IV . . .</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book V . . . .</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book VI . . .</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>90</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rate per minute</td>
<td>60</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>79</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>86</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>90</td>
<td>98</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>105</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Small booklets about 3 inches by 5 inches were made containing ten pages, the fold coming at the top rather than at the side. On each page was pasted a phrase cut from a worn-out primary reader. This proved a more effective device than the blackboard exercise since it provided a more natural situation, the size of the print and the length of the phrase being similar to that which the pupil meets in his reading. Each page was flashed before the pupil as he sat beside the teacher. Scoring was very simple since the book contained ten phrases, and ten was counted off from 100 for each phrase which was not given correctly. Teachers using these
books usually prepared about five, the first being very simple, and each succeeding book growing more difficult, the phrases being slightly longer and taken from more difficult readers and therefore containing finer print. A pupil was given Book I first. When he succeeded in scoring 100 in this book it was no longer used and the pupil was given Book II, etc. In this way a record showing actual progress was kept from day to day. Table I presents a record taken from a progress book and illustrating the pupil's improvement by the use of these phrase books. Memory plays some part in this improvement. This is not objectionable but can be largely eliminated by increasing the length of the book to fifty or more pages.

Table I is explained as follows: Two lessons were given using Book I. Two trials were permitted in the first lesson, a perfect score resulting. At the next lesson this perfect score was repeated, and the instructor passed to Book II when the pupil was given three chances to score 100. This was not accomplished until the fourth lesson.

Examples of phrases found in Book I and in Book VI follow. The phrases in Book I were printed in primer type; those in Book VI, in twelve-point type.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Book I</th>
<th>Book VI</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>at last</td>
<td>half the kingdom</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>by and by</td>
<td>Early in the morning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one morning</td>
<td>On his way home</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at home</td>
<td>There was once</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>all day</td>
<td>Once upon a time</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>far away</td>
<td>a bit farther</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>just then</td>
<td>In the meantime</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ran away</td>
<td>with all his might</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>very well</td>
<td>toward evening</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>at once</td>
<td>In an instant</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To test the extent to which this phrase drill was affecting the reading rate of this pupil, the teacher timed his silent reading of some story for one minute in each lesson. The rate record taken from her progress book and given at the bottom of Table I shows that there must be some relation between phrase drill and silent-reading rate.
Not all of the teachers used the phrase booklets. Some preferred sets of small flash cards $2\frac{1}{2}$ in. by $3\frac{1}{4}$ in. in size. They mounted the phrases on the cards and flashed them as described. These sets were graded in difficulty. They were easy to handle and since the cards could be mixed after each trial the children did not memorize phrases by their location in the booklet.

**DEFECTS OCCURRING IN SILENT READING AFFECTING COMPREHENSION, WITH AN OUTLINE OF CORRECTIVE METHODS USED**

1. *Inability to understand the meanings of words.*—In cases of inability to get the meaning of long, unfamiliar words a study was made of prefixes, suffixes, and stems. After learning the meaning of "re" and "er" pupils were able to study out independently the meaning of words like "reorganizer." If a pupil met an unfamiliar word in his work he was asked to give a sentence of his own containing the new word after he had looked it up or had been told the meaning.

A study was made of homonyms. Lists of such words were placed in the pupil's progress book. Sentences illustrating the use of the homonyms were selected from the reading material whenever they were met with and placed opposite the appropriate word in the record books.

The seat-work exercise which had for its aim the building up of a meaning vocabulary consisted of "coloring" by means of fitting words a paragraph from which several words had been omitted. A typical exercise follows: "Saturday had come at last. Jane was sitting on a (low) limb of an (apple) tree. It was a (sunny) June afternoon. Flowers (bloomed), birds (sang), butterflies (flitted) everywhere."

The words in parentheses were omitted and blanks drawn in their place. The pupil filled in the blank spaces with words he thought best supplied the meaning.

Pupils in the primary grades built up large meaning vocabularies as a result of the following seat-work exercise. Sets of ten-word groups each were cut from old discarded primary readers, mounted on stiff paper, cut into separate word groups and placed in envelopes made by the pupils for this purpose. Each envelope
was numbered. A pupil received an envelope and during the seatwork period illustrated each word group with pencil and crayons, and placed the proper word group directly under each picture. The teacher checked this work carefully at the close of each period. If a child had made mistakes, he was told what the phrases were and given another chance to score 100 on the following day. Examples of mistakes were “a brown house” for “a brown horse,” “the little chicken” for “the little children,” etc. When pupils scored 100 their envelopes were collected and they were given a new number. The teacher kept a record of the number of each envelope as a child finished it. As no two word groups in the entire set of envelopes were the same, a child who had completed fifteen envelopes would have comprehended one hundred and fifty word groups well enough to illustrate them correctly. The following examples of these word groups were taken from one of these envelopes:

- a red squirrel
- a fat boy
- three big eggs
- a red and yellow kite
- a wee, wee house

- our flag
- seven children
- the blue flowers
- two little robins
- some brown leaves

2. Inability to reproduce the thought of paragraphs read.—Pupils were taught that every story has its time, place, and action elements, that every plot has its sentences looking forward, sentences looking backward, key sentences, and a climax, and that every character is portrayed by conversation, by description, and by words conveying action.

Short prose selections were cut from old readers, magazines, and papers, and mounted on stiff cardboard. The same was done with selections of poetry. The following direction was given by the teacher: “Read this silently, carefully, and but once. After you have read it, write the story. If you cannot remember the words in the story, use your own words.” Many teachers preferred asking for an oral reproduction given slowly enough so that they could write it as it was given. In both cases the score in reproduction was secured by underlining the parts correctly reproduced, counting the number of underlined words, and dividing this number by the total number of words in the selection read.
In cases where a poor reproduction was given, the pupil was asked to re-read the selection in search of ideas which he had omitted in the first reading. A second reproduction was then given, scored, and compared with the first.

3. Inability to give correct answers to specific questions about a paragraph.—Four types of remedial work were given to train pupils to read more carefully and intelligently.

a) The asking of fact questions, the answers to which could be given in the exact wording of parts of the paragraph. Mounted paragraphs similar to those described for the giving of reproductions were used. On the back of the cardboard the teacher placed a number of questions of the type just mentioned. A sample paragraph is given to show material and the questions used.

THE ESKIMO'S HOUSE

An Eskimo's winter home is made of snow. The Eskimo makes his house in one day. He cuts big blocks out of the snow. He puts them together. He must work carefully. At last the house is finished. There is a hole in one side. It is just large enough to crawl through. That is the door. What a queer little house with its queer little door! How can people live in it? But they do.

QUESTIONS

How long does it take to make an Eskimo winter hut?
Of what is it made?
Where is the door?
How large is it?

The teacher gave the following directions: “Read this selection or story silently, carefully, and but once. After you have read it, answer the questions on the other side, using complete sentences.”

In scoring this exercise 100 was used as a basis and each question was counted as a fractional part of 100.

In cases where pupils received very low scores they were permitted to read the selection as many times as necessary in order to find the answers to the questions. Gradually they improved until many were able to answer all the questions after one reading.

b) The asking of thought questions, the answers to which would be governed by the extent to which the pupil understood the paragraph read. The following illustrates the type of material used:
“Oh, the sunshine told the bluebird,  
And the bluebird told the brook,  
That the dandelions were peeping,  
From the woodland’s sheltered nook.”

What season do you think the stanza describes?

c) The stating of a fact or a thought question in such a way that the pupil must follow specific directions in answering it. Both poetry and prose were used. A prose selection is given to illustrate the method used:

“There was once upon a time a king, and he had a daughter who would always have the last word. She was so cross and contrary in her speech that no one could silence her.”

If you like the king’s daughter write “yes”; if you do not, draw lines under the words which make you dislike her.

d) Solving of riddles in which the answer to the riddle could be found by comprehension of the selection read. Examples of this material are:

WHAT BIRD AM I?
I’m not a robin,
I’m not a wren
I’m not a pigeon,
I’m not a hen,
I’m not a bluejay,
Although I’m blue
And in the springtime
I sing to you.

4. Inability to select main ideas.—Short prose selections were mounted similar to those described for the work in reproducing and answering specific questions. The directions given to pupils were as follows: “Read this selection carefully. When you have read it, write out what you consider to be the main points in the selection.”

This type of work was preceded by class work of a similar nature. Using the regular reader, the teacher took the day’s assignment and assisted the group in finding the main idea or ideas in each paragraph. She showed them that each paragraph has a topic sentence and gave drill in finding this. She showed that the sentences following this explain or amplify the topic sentence. In this way pupils were taught to list the main ideas in a paragraph or selection.