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AN ANALYSIS OF THREE CASE STUDIES  
OF INDIVIDUAL DEVELOPMENT IN READING

by

DONALD JOHN HARRINGTON


B. A. Gonzaga University, 1950

Presented in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree of  
Master of Education

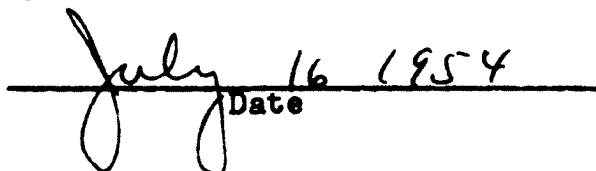
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1954

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

This paper will describe the use of, and the effects of, both a general and an individualized reading program. This will be done by reporting three case studies. Reading authorities mention that there is need for wider use of individual case study methods in studying reading behavior. By means of case studies, the individual's needs may be studied before a specific reading program is adopted.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, increase of reading interests produce other gains, for example, increased willingness to participate in out of school activities.<sup>2</sup>

### DEFINITION OF TERMS

Case Study: The collecting and analyzing of data to show the background of each child with regard to his environment, home conditions, and general personality traits, together with his school achievements and weaknesses.

A General Reading Program: A general reading program is one in which all members of one reading class read silently or orally from the same text simultaneously; that is, while one pupil reads orally, the rest of the pupils

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<sup>1</sup>W. S. Gray, "Summary of Reading Investigations," Journal of Educational Research, 37:411, February, 1944.

<sup>2</sup>Loc. cit.

follow his reading silently.

An Individualized Reading Program: An individualized reading program is one adjusted to pupils possessing different reading levels. In other words, each pupil has a reader which reflects the pupil's reading level. Each pupil reads independently from his own assigned book. Since an average sixth grade class varies from four to six years in reading competence, it is not unusual for one pupil to be reading a seventh or eighth grade book while one of his classmates may be reading from a second or third grade book.

#### DELIMITATION OF THE FIELD OF STUDY

This study was made on one class in a Montana public elementary school covering a period of two and one-half years. The chronological age range of class members covered a span of two and one-half years. Reading methods and materials used on this particular group will be described later.

This study employed three cases -- one of high mentality, one of average mentality, and one of low mentality. In each case, a longitudinal study was made of the student covering the period from November first, 1951, to April first, 1954. This type of study was used because it covered both the periods when the pupils study under a general reading program (one year) and under an individualized reading



program (one and one-half years).

#### IMPORTANCE OF THE STUDY

This study is important because it makes the participating teacher more aware of the individual student and his needs. It also makes him conscious of the need to make school more meaningful to pupils. By use of the case study method, the teacher can observe the growth in reading of pupils from word readers to fluent readers, as well as seeing their interest in and attitude toward school change for the better.

## CHAPTER II

### PREPARATION NEEDED TO CARRY ON THE STUDY

The preparation needed to carry on the study will be treated under the following heading: (1) Reading Programs; (2) Reading Difficulties; (3) Reading Rate; (4) Reading Tests; (5) The Relation of Eye Movements to Reading Facility, and (7) Comprehension and Vocabulary Growth.

### READING PROGRAMS

A good reading program should help each child improve his reading. Worry, anger, and distractions, however, may prevent the child from receiving full value from a good reading program. Proper techniques may remove most of the reading obstacles for any child with an average or above average intelligent quotient.<sup>1</sup> Consequently, teachers must detect any emotional blocks that children have. It is also necessary to determine their pupil's level with respect to reading achievement. A reading program according to Russell<sup>2</sup> should include four main types of experience: (a) developmental, which will improve reading skills, (b) functional, which will improve content subject readings;

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<sup>1</sup>Grace Fernald, Reading Techniques in Basis School Subjects. (New York: McGraw Hill Company, 1943), p. 2.

<sup>2</sup>David Russel, Children Learn to Read. (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1947), p. 478.

(c) recreational, which will satisfy curiosity, and (d) enrichment which will improve the quantity of a child's reading.

A good reading program must also provide plenty of supplementary material. The real test of any reading program is the amount and quality of reading material each child reads. Interest supplies the motivation needed to make or break a reading program. The reading program should create the desire upon the part of the child to read, and should help him to find pleasurable recreation in reading. A good reading program also provides individual instruction in the following areas at every level: (a) seeing the relationship between the ideas and words; (b) evaluating the author's statements; (c) drawing inferences, and (d) identifying a problem and adjusting the type of reading to fulfill that purpose.<sup>3</sup> Finally, school systems themselves should try out new procedures or materials in actual classroom situations in order to improve their reading program.

#### READING DIFFICULTIES

The most common reading errors include mispronunciations, omissions, insertions, and reversals.<sup>4</sup> Traxler<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>3</sup>Marjorie Johnson, "Factors in Reading Comprehension," Educational Administration and Supervision, 35:403, November, 1949.

<sup>4</sup>Russell, op. cit., p. 274.

<sup>5</sup>Arthur Traxler, "Research in Reading in the U.S." Journal of Educational Research, 42:486, March, 1949.

mentions that reversals should not persist after the third grade. Fernald's method of tracing is probably best for reversals and inversions because it employs not only the visual and auditory senses, but also the kinesthetic. Omissions are generally due to an inferior sight vocabulary. Therefore, phonics should not be introduced to any child until he has a sight vocabulary of fifty to one hundred words.<sup>6</sup> Repetitions may be due to loss in train of thought. For those who are guilty of insertions in reading, improvement in word recognition is needed. Many repetitions are due to poor eye movement or slowness in word recognition while reversals may be caused by problems of immaturity.<sup>7</sup> Children having trouble with medial sounds need further practice in discriminating between vowels.<sup>8</sup>

Major reading difficulties frequently found, include: (1) inability to recognize basic words, (2) faulty attack on new words, and (3) failure to comprehend what is read.<sup>9</sup>

Backwardness in reading comprehension may be attributed to inferior intelligence, poor reading vocabulary, and

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<sup>6</sup>Samuel Kirk, Teaching Reading to Slow-Learning Children, (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1946), p. 116.

<sup>7</sup>Albert Harris, How to Increase Reading Abilities, (New York: Longsman, Green and Company, 1946), pp. 331.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 319.

<sup>9</sup>Kathleen Hester, "Dade County Meets the Reading Problem," Elementary School Journal, 47:156, November, 1946.

over-emphasis on word recognition with little or no emphasis on context clues.<sup>10</sup>

Slow reading is often attributed to (1) lack of enough practice in reading easy and interesting material, and (2) lack of motivation to improve speed.<sup>11</sup> Poor readers frequently exhibit the following disabilities: (1) word-by-word reading, (2) poor phrasing, (3) little or no knowledge of letter sounds, and (4) a limited sight vocabulary.

Most reading difficulties would disappear if children could read books within their vocabulary and experience range, and if school systems had reading programs developed on these three foundations: (1) stressing development of experimental background rather than covering the book; (2) placing greater emphasis on teaching the individual, and (3) teaching children how to read and how to use this skill in their factual and leisure reading.<sup>12</sup>

#### READING RATE

Reading rate can be increased through the use of pacers. For example, allowing only so much time to read so many pages, or holding a piece of paper above or below the line being read helps all children, but especially those

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<sup>10</sup>Arthur Gates, The Improvement of Reading, (New York: Macmillan Company, 1947), pp. 385-387.

<sup>11</sup>Harris, op. cit., p. 471.

<sup>12</sup>Hester, op. cit., p. 156.

with poor left-right eye movements. Uninterrupted reading for two minutes also helps improve children's reading rate when it is followed by one question per one hundred words. The fastest reader in the class may be reading five times faster than the slowest reader. A good way to bring permanent improvement in the rate of reading is to direct the reading instruction toward increasing comprehension in many reading areas of interest. Therefore, children should be taught to use context clues in learning new words.

#### READING TESTS

For remedial purposes a comprehension test should be diagnostic in the sense that it reveals strengths and weaknesses in reading skills. The standardized test is not necessarily a true evaluation of reading readiness. Diagnostic tests often contain items to test ability to: (1) note the main ideas, (2) note details, (3) draw conclusions, (4) know exact meaning of key words, and (5) follow instructions. If these tests contained the aforementioned items, specific skills would be measured by a certain teacher at a certain time.

#### THE RELATION OF EYE MOVEMENTS TO READING FACILITY

Children should have annual eye check-ups. Careful attention must be given to visual examinations in the diagnosis of poor readers because clear visual impression is

requisite for reading.<sup>13</sup> A binocular reading test and astigmatism charts which check fusion in both eyes are valuable supplements to a visual screening test such as the Snellen chart test.

Eye movements habits are controlled by the type of material read and the purpose for which it is read. Good readers use different eye movements in reading for different purposes. Faulty eye movements are more often a result of inadequate comprehension than a cause of poor reading.<sup>14</sup>

#### VOCABULARY AND COMPREHENSION

There is need of a correlation between vocabulary in the basic reading program with the vocabulary in other subjects because comprehension depends on accuracy of the perception of each word and the kind of meaning evoked once the word is recognized.<sup>15</sup> Therefore, for each subject a pre-test on vocabulary should be given at the beginning of the course in order to reveal vocabulary weaknesses.

Teachers should reveal to each student his or her vocabulary weaknesses. This can be done by having all the

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<sup>13</sup>Helen M. Robinson, Why Pupils Fail in Reading, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), p. 224.

<sup>14</sup>Constance McCullough, Ruth Strang, and Arthur Traxler, Problems in the Improvement of Reading. (New York: McGraw Hill Company, 1946), p. 237.

<sup>15</sup>Herman Berger, "Differences of Third Grade Health Readers," Elementary School Journal, 47:395, March, 1947.

children read one chapter and list all the unknown or difficult words they find. Then they are given a teacher-made matching test of thirty or forty difficult words. After the tests are graded, each pupil re-reads the chapter and tries to figure out the meaning of mis-defined words through the use of context clues.<sup>16</sup>

The previous example is very useful because children with a good knowledge of words do better school work. Therefore, the teacher must place a greater emphasis on vocabulary building.<sup>17</sup> Vocabulary growth comes from repeated use of words in meaningful situations, since the ultimate goal of word perception is developing a method of word-attack that is easy for each child to apply and understand.<sup>18</sup>

A comprehension score is valid when each child is allowed to finish his test to see if his score will change when time isn't of prime importance. Then the teacher can tell whether the basic difficulty is comprehension or a slow

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<sup>16</sup>Donald Durrell, Improvement of Basic Reading Abilities. (New York: World Book Company, 1940, p. 154.

<sup>17</sup>Arthur E. Traxler, "Relationship between Vocabulary and General Achievement in the Elementary School," Elementary School Journal, 45:333, February, 1945.

<sup>18</sup>W. S. Gray, On Their Own in Reading. (Chicago: Scott-Foresman and Company, 1948), p. 105.



rate of reading,<sup>19</sup> and the point where a child begins to miss nearly all the questions is the point at which the teacher should stop corrections in order to get a true comprehension rate of the child.

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<sup>19</sup>McCullough, Strang, and Traxler, op. cit., p. 273.

## CHAPTER III

### PROCEDURE

At the start of this study, the three cases were reading under a "general" program which, as explained previously, required all the pupils of one class reading orally or silently from the same reading textbook at the same time. This method seemed to have the following rather obvious faults:

1. There was a waste of time for superior readers who had to listen to slow readers stumble or mispronounce words. This may have developed in superior readers the habit of re-reading everything so as not to get bored. It also may have cut down silent reading speed because of the lack of proper eye movements.

2. The reading period became a time to be feared by slow readers because they became frustrated when they found that they could not pronounce or "unlock" new or difficult words. It also gave these slow readers a feeling of inadequacy because they knew that they were falling below the average reader in the class. A possible result of this could have been the development of a too rapid left-right movement for these poor readers because they had to move their eyes much more rapidly when average or superior readers read, and this could decrease their already below average comprehension scores.

On the other hand, this "general" method appeared to have these results:

1. It enabled the fast readers to reduce their reading rate, and thus encouraged them to read at different reading rates in the various subject fields.

2. It seemed to help the slow reader to increase the scope of his eye movements from a word-to-word reader to a phrase reader.

Neither of these two advantages appeared to counter-balance the weaknesses of the general program.

After following this general method of teaching reading for one year, the teacher of this class (the author of this study) took work in elementary curriculum. His instructor concluded this class with this remark: "You, as teachers, are not teaching reading if you have every pupil in one class reading from the same book at the same time." He also stated that every pupil has his own reading level.<sup>1</sup>

To determine the reading level of each child, a teacher should have access to readers from grades one through twelve. Starting with the first grade reader, the teacher permits each child to read approximately ten lines. If the child does not make more than four oral reading errors, he is then permitted to read the second grade book. This continues until the pupil reads a book in which he makes in

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<sup>1</sup>Mr. Knudsen, Instructor in Elementary Curriculum, Montana State University, Missoula, Montana.

excess of four errors in reading ten lines. Dropping this level by one year in order to insure initial interest and success, the teacher has the oral reading level of that pupil. Durrell<sup>2</sup> mentions that this method is the most practical way of determining the difficulty level of reading books suitable for instruction in the primary grades but since reading skills go through all grades, this method is also equally applicable in all grades, even into high school.

With only twenty-two pupils in a sixth grade class, it was possible in the school year of 1952-1953 by means of a staggered daily schedule to take each pupil for a five minute oral reading period. In this period, each pupil was checked for meanings of unfamiliar or new words, as well as on comprehension of what was read. Pacers which consisted of a piece of paper being held a line above or below that being read were also used to help slow readers with poor eye movements. Context clues to aid in defining new words were also stressed. If a pupil continued to increase his rate of comprehension and reading speed for a continuous period of two weeks, he was given a week's "trial run" at the next higher level. For example if "A" was reading on a fourth grade level, and for two continuous weeks made progress in his comprehension scores and reading rate, he was promoted

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<sup>2</sup>Donald Durrell, Improvement of Basic Reading Abilities, (New York: World Book Company, 1940), p. 52.

to a grade five reading level for one week. If in that week he continued to improve, he stayed at that level. However, if during the week he showed lack of comprehension or stumbled over too many words, he was returned to his former fourth grade reading level. This latter process of going up one level higher and then returning to the lower level only happened once, and that was with Pupil A (see Chapter V). During the school year of 1952-1953, he progressed from grade level three to grade five but upon returning to school in September, 1953, he was found to be again on grade level three.

During the school year 1953-1954, the teacher involved in this study had to teach grades in which there were thirty-eight pupils for the first half year and twenty-seven for the second half, so a revision of the 1952-1953 plan was needed in order to have an individualized reading program. In this situation, the help of the three best readers in the class was readily secured. Each of these "helper teachers" was assigned eight pupils in the average or superior reading groups. These helpers had their own reading period before class began. In the pre-school-day period, these pupils would be checked not only for the necessary reading skills, but their daily reading plan. In this way, the teacher could make certain that each pupil in the class was getting enough practice in the essential reading skills. The

teacher would exchange groups with these pupils about once a month. Nevertheless, the four pupils who needed individual daily guidance from the teachers were given this help between 8:20 and 8:45 each day.

A remedial reading textbook which was found to be very useful for those readers who were retarded in the primary grades, or who had been sick frequently, or just not ready to read at that time was Improving Your Reading.<sup>3</sup>

The Scott-Foresman Series<sup>4</sup> and the Ginn and Company Readers<sup>5</sup> were used as supplementary books. The first named series was especially useful because of the very comprehensive teachers' manual. These books provide aid to teachers in the first four grades in cutting down their remedial problems by using two reading textbooks for each grade. Thus, teachers are able to get a new slant on the big problem of keeping reading as an interesting yet challenging experience.

As indicated above, the first step in setting up an individualized reading program was to find each pupil's reading level. Individual differences were recognized by setting aside the major part of the first school day to

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<sup>3</sup>Bertha Brown and Helen Wilkson, Improving Your Reading. (New York: Noble and Noble, 1946), 363 pp.

<sup>4</sup>W. S. Gray, editor, Curriculum Foundation Series. (Chicago: Scott-Foresman Company, 1948), 754 pp.

<sup>5</sup>David Russell and others, The Ginn Basic Readers. (Boston: Ginn and Company, 1949), 490 pp.

establish by means of an informal test, the reading level of each child.

Vocabulary growth was checked each day during this oral reading period by asking each pupil the meaning of important or unfamiliar words. Getting the meaning of these words from context was stressed in order to get all pupils to use this valuable means of gaining a useful vocabulary. Getting the main idea, seeing possible conclusions, and inferences, and other valuable reading skills were also emphasized. During their reading speed test of two minutes, pupils were further checked for comprehension on such skills as understanding the topic sentence and its over-all importance to the sentence, as well as getting the idea of the author and learning how to unlock new or difficult words.

Provisions for differences in each child's reading habits were in force during the regular reading period. Slow readers used books suitable to their own reading level, and this, as mentioned earlier, removed many difficulties in a reading program. Average and superior readers were cared for in the same way. The content of library books was checked to see that slow readers were not reading material that could cause them to lose interest in a book because its vocabulary was too difficult for them to comprehend.

Silent reading was used as a tool to serve the individual's needs by means of assignments that were built up gradually, and clearly given. Each child was reminded

daily of trying to unlock new words and trying to define their use in the sentence by means of context clues. Children who continually ignore difficult words met in silent reading fail to build up a vocabulary because many words have more than one meaning. But this is even more important for those pupils who read extensively and get a varied diet in reading from the library or supplementary books from the different content fields. Furthermore, each pupil was checked to see that he had within his reading abilities all needed skills in oral reading before these skills were transformed to silent reading. When the pupils read silently, they had been given prior instruction as to the "why" of their reading. In this way, they were reading for a purpose, as mentioned in preceding pages, "reading for a purpose" is an important skill to give children because reading then becomes a more meaningful and challenging activity.



## CHAPTER IV

### USE OF THE CASE STUDY METHOD

Much emphasis has been placed on the case study method in the past few years. This is shown by the appearance of case studies in the most recent books written by reading experts about reading problems and their solution. However, the amount of material written about case studies carried on in the classrooms is still negligible, though rapidly increasing. This continued emphasis suggests that the case study method of helping children with reading difficulties is finding a place in the everyday world of education, as well as in reading clinics and laboratories.

Stelzel<sup>1</sup> found that slow learners in reading can improve their reading skills in a self-contained classroom by use of the kinesthetic method. His results were based on alternate tests given at the beginning and end of the study. In this connection, it is interesting to note that other classroom experimenters have revealed that a composite approach through visual, auditory, and kinesthetic stimulation also improves reading comprehension in the gifted child.

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Stelzel, The Application of the Kinesthetic Method Techniques to Retarded Readers in the Self-Contained Classroom," Unpublished Master's Professional Paper, Montana State University, Missoula, Montana, 1953, p. 53.

Guthrie<sup>2</sup> found that every child in grades one to twelve can have a more normal growth in reading if every teacher is conscious of the fact that she is responsible for the development of both general reading abilities and the vocabulary suited to a particular subject.

Grilley<sup>3</sup> points out that a remedial reading program which reflects consideration of the child's personality and social adjustment can help a child to do better in reading because the child does things that are normal for him in a particular situation. In other words, the content of developmental reading material should be related to the child's actual experiences.

Robinson<sup>4</sup> of the University of Chicago Reading Clinic followed this pattern with twenty-two pupils who had reading difficulties: (1) referral by a parent or an adult interested in the child's welfare; (2) study of the child through an individual intelligence test, an achievement and performance test, eye examinations to determine any visual deficiency, and gathering information on the family background in order to determine any emotional disturbance; (3) a group

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<sup>2</sup>James Guthrie, "A Description of the Administration of a Planned Reading Program in the Public School of Culbertson, Montana," Unpublished Master's Professional Paper, Montana State University, Missoula, Montana, 1951, p. 52.

<sup>3</sup>Helen Grilley, "An Intensive Study in Remedial Reading," Unpublished Master's Professional Paper, Montana State University, Missoula, Montana, 1950, p. 93.

<sup>4</sup>Helen Robinson, Why Pupils Fail in Reading. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1946), pp. 166-218.

examination of the findings so as to set up a remedial plan, and (4) an evaluation of the results of the plan. This approach ordinarily resulted in an improvement of the child's reading. Robinson noted that the main causes for reading difficulties were emotional problems and visual deficiencies.

Three case studies at Teachers College, Columbia University<sup>5</sup> started with these two steps: (1) interview parent or person who referred child in order to gain a general idea of the child's problem and his personality traits, (2) interview the child to find where his interest lies and begin at that point. For retarded readers the kinesthetic method was used and for average readers interested in tests a battery of tests was given and the results checked with the child in order that he might know his own difficulties. Then the clinicians would proceed as follows: (1) help the child to begin each lesson with a sense of achievement; (2) praise his efforts as well as point out and emphasize concrete examples of improving skills, and finally (3) discuss the mistakes made and offer immediate and appropriate drill.

Gates<sup>6</sup> used the following pattern with thirteen cases: (1) secure the case history of the pupil's home and

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<sup>5</sup>McCullough, Strang, and Traxler, op. cit., pp.310-344.

<sup>6</sup>Gates, op. cit., pp. 531-571.

school life, (2) make a comprehensive diagnosis of reading disabilities, (3) treat the revealed difficulties, (4) evaluate in terms of initial and final scores on alternate test.

In four very thorough case studies conducted at the City College of New York by Harris,<sup>7</sup> the remedial work went as follows: (1) diagnosis; (2) general impressions, (3) complete physical examination, (4) test on reading abilities, and (5) summary of reading difficulties.

These were then followed by making a family and school history. Emotional disturbances were checked and then an inclusive summary of the diagnostic work was produced. Recommendations of the staff members formed the basis for remedial work which covered materials, vocabulary, oral and silent reading together with comprehension, reading speed and adequate motivation. The case ended with an evaluation of the diagnostic work in terms of standardized tests and the staff's observations.

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<sup>7</sup>Harris, op. cit., pp. 503-541.

## CHAPTER V

### CASE STUDIES

It was mentioned in the introductory chapter that case studies would be used as a means of interpreting the effects of the two types of reading programs on three pupils. As careful analysis as possible was made of each pupil, his environment, and his progress in reading under the individualized reading program.

At the beginning of this study, no standardized test was given. The boys were reading from a fifth grade reading text. Case A was very poor in reading. He read word-by-word, reversed frequently, lacked adequate skill in word attack, and his rate of reading and comprehension were extremely slow and uncertain, respectively. Case B was also poor in reading. He too was a word-by-word reader and was frequently guilty of insertion errors. He had no definite method of word attack, was poor at recall, and had a slow reading rate in all content subjects. Case C read well on the fifth grade level, in fact, he could probably have read adequately at the next level. However, his vocabulary was weak and he had articulation difficulties.

These boys were given an intelligence test, the Kuhlmann-Finch,<sup>1</sup> in January, 1952. The results were about

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<sup>1</sup>F. Kuhlmann, and L. G. Finch, Kuhlmann-Finch Intelligence Test, Educational Test Bureau, Minneapolis, Minn., 1946 - 23.

as would be expected. Case A showed inferior intelligence, Case B average intelligence, and Case C superior intelligence. In May of that year, and again at the end of the year under the general reading program, no standardized test was given. Nevertheless, through teacher observation and informal read-tests, it was found that these boys still possessed the same reading faults that they had at the beginning of the school year.

These boys began working under an individualized reading program in September, 1952 when they entered the sixth grade. Case A began reading on a third grade level, Case B on a fourth grade level, and Case C on a seventh grade level. Near the end of the school year, April, 1953, they were given two achievement tests.

The California Achievement Test (Elementary)<sup>2</sup> had been used in the school system in 1952. To reduce feelings of anxiety, the teacher went over the questions in the test with the children, not expecting that the same test would be administered again. However, when the day of testing arrived the teacher was disturbed to find the same form of the California Achievement Test being administered. The students, of course, did very well on it. Because of this fact, the principal gave the Stanford Intermediate Test (Form E)<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup>E. W. Tieg and E. T. Sullivan, California Achievement Test (Elementary) Los Angeles: Calif. Test Bureau, 1943), 25 p.

<sup>3</sup>G. M. Ruch, T. L. Kelley & L. M. Terman, Stanford Intermediate Test (Form E), New York: World Book Co.) 1944.

in order to see if the high results of the California Test were valid. The results of the second test showed that most of the class were over-rated about one and one-half years. This was especially true in vocabulary.

Near the end of their seventh grade, March, 1954, the boys were given another intelligence test, the California Test of Mental Maturity,<sup>4</sup> They were also given a reading achievement test, the Gate's Reading Survey.<sup>5</sup>

The aforementioned intelligence test has both a language and a non-language section. One would expect that this type of test would result in higher reading scores by slow readers because the non-language section requires no reading aptitude. The results with respect to Case A, however, proved just the opposite. This may be explained by the fact that children are able to respond more fully at one time than another in test situations. The previously mentioned reading test checked these important reading skills: vocabulary, level of comprehension, reading speed and reading accuracy. To prove that reading experts believe comprehension is an important reading skill, a pupil had to receive a score of ninety seven per cent to be average in reading

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<sup>4</sup>E. W. Tieg, W. W. Clark, and E. T. Sullivan, California Test of Mental Maturity, (Madison: California Test Bureau, 1943).

<sup>5</sup>Arthur Gates, Gates Reading Survey, (New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers' College, Columbia U., 1939).

accuracy. For example, if a pupil did forty questions in the allotted time limit and had thirty-nine correct answers, he would receive an average score.

Following are the separate studies of Cases A, B, and C. The longitudinal studies of these three students will aid in showing the results coming from these two ways (individualized and general) of teaching reading in the classroom.

#### CASE STUDY ON PUPIL A

Case A is a boy of low mentality (see Mental Tests results at the bottom of Table I, page 27). His over-all school work is also below average as determined by teacher observation of class performance. He comes from a home in which the parents appear to emphasize having a good time but with little attention given to proper methods of raising children. The family consists of eight children ranging in age from eight to twenty-two. One of Case A's brothers had been sent to reform school. Since this boy was a rheumatic fever case his mother showed a great interest in him for the past two years. At the time this study was completed, his fever and his mother's interest had left him.

He is mainly interested in western books. This was probably due to the fact that one of his elder brothers worked on a ranch, and, on several occasions, Case A visited him.



TABLE I

SCORES OF PUPIL "A" ON VARIOUS ACHIEVEMENT AND MENTAL TESTS  
1948 to 1954

Achievement Tests:

1. Metropolitan Primary Reading Test<sup>6</sup>

	Chronological		Grade Level on:		
	Age	Grade	Word Picture	Word Meaning	Word Recognition
6/2/48	8-10	1	1-7	1-6	1-9

2. California Achievement Test (Elementary)

	Chronological		Grade Level on:	
	Age	Grade	Reading Vocabulary	Reading Comprehension
4/14/53	13-8	6	5-2	4-9

3. Stanford Achievement (Form E)

	Chronological		Grade Level on:	
	Age	Grade	Paragraph Meaning	Word Meaning
4/23/53	13-8	6	4-0	3-8

4. Gates Reading Survey

	Chronological		Grade Level on:			
	Age	Grade	Compre- hension	Vocab- ulary	Reading Speed	Accuracy
3/30/53	14-8	7	4-5	3-7	4-1	76%

Mental Tests:

	Date	C.A.	M.A.	I.Q.
1. Kuhlmann Anderson <sup>7</sup>	9/3/49	10-5	8-8	70
2. Kuhlmann Finch	1/11/52	12-9	9-7	75
3. California Test of Mental Maturity	3/31/54	14-11	11-4	76

<sup>6</sup>R. D. Allen, H. H. Bixler, W. L. Connor, F. B. Graham, G. H. Hilreth, and J. S. Orleans, Metropolitan Primary Reading Test. (New York: World Book Company, 1940).

<sup>7</sup>F. Kuhlmann and R. G. Anderson, Kuhlmann-Anderson, Intelligence Test, Minneapolis Educational Test Bureau, Minnesota, 1942).

To enable Case A to become a better reader than the third grade level at which he started in grade six, some steps outside of any reading program were needed. He first had to develop habits that would make him accepted by the group. Habits which pushed his classmates away from him included: Uncleanliness, an antagonism toward girls, telling tall stories and lying, and crying over every little thing that happened to him.

To aid Case A to become a cleaner boy, the teacher checked every morning and afternoon before school began in order to see that his hands and face were washed, his hair combed, and his fingernails reasonably clean. Although Case A had to be sent to the lavatory many times to clean up, he showed that he profited by these experiences because of the following: (1) after each visit, he would come back into the classroom with a smile on his face, pleased with his own appearance; (2) he began to clean his hands, face, and fingernails, as well as comb his hair. All this showed that he now felt more on an equal basis with other members of his class.

To get Case A "in" with the girls was a difficult problem up until the time that he first realized that cleanliness attracted friends. The girls were very good sports in regard to A, even when he was dirty. They began to choose him as a partner in square dancing and they all tried to

help him gain confidence while dancing. Today, A is one of the most active boys in the class with respect to activities of this kind.

At first, A showed a real interest in English. Using this as a starting point, an effort was made to put him in the "limelight" in order to encourage him to excel in other subjects as well as show his classmates that he should be recognized by them as an equal. This recognition soon came and A was just "another one of the gang" in most activities.

Case A was at one time a story teller. Although imagination is a good trait when kept within certain bounds, it can be carried to extremes. In fact, this type of thing nearly ruined A in the eyes of his classmates because it seemed that he was trying to pass his shortcomings on to those students who either shunned or ridiculed him. The climax of his "fibbing" came when A was in the fifth grade. One afternoon the principal asked the combination class if anyone knew who had done a certain act the previous night after school. Immediately, this boy raised his hand and began to talk. Before long, A had mentioned the names of the most popular boys and girls in the class. To show the falseness of his story, two of the accused members lived some four miles from the school on ranches and had not left home after arriving there the previous day. When this discussion ended and the principal left the room, the class was given an assignment and A was taken from the room and

told of the wrongs he had committed. At this point A began to cry. He was then sent to the lavatory, and while he was there, the class received a talk which stressed the idea, "forget the whole matter." This was done to offset any possible rough treatment that might possibly be forthcoming for A. After this incident had taken place, A had only one other occasion to get into the same kind of trouble, but it resolved itself without any questioning on the part of the principal or encouragement on the part of the teacher.

A's crying habit was his main emotional problem. It probably was due to home conditions. While A was in the fifth grade, any attempt to correct or reprimand him ended in a flood of tears, as was previously noted. A was then told privately that crying was a baby trait, but he still continued it for a month. The reason this trait may have been home-centered is the fact that A was not in perfect health at this time and his mother may have been giving him extra attention and care at home. Therefore, because every little whimper brought him this extra attention, he may have thought the same result would hold true in the classroom.

With A's emotional problems pretty well taken care of, the problem of reading could be tackled.

A's low mentality had always hampered his school progress. His first two teachers worked hard in helping him to become an average reader, but still he stayed behind. This was followed by a two year plateau of reading, and, as

was stated before, A could only read a third grade book when he entered the sixth grade.

As a result of the individualized reading program, A developed a real interest in reading and at the end of this study, was reading about three books a month. In February of 1954, he read six books -- this may have been due to the contest of boys versus girls held during that "Reading for Fun" month.

A has now (May, 1954) nearly eliminated his reversals, and his word recognition is improving because of extra work on dictionary skills such as dividing the word into syllables and learning the diacritical marks. He still stumbles over many words but he is able to pronounce them after they are repeated two or three times. His use of context clues and finding the meaning of words in a sentence has also helped him. His work on synonyms has also aided his word recognition. A's oral reading is satisfactory on a sixth grade level and he does fairly well in oral reading in the seventh grade content textbooks. He still reads too slowly silently, but use of pacers has helped him to gain some speed in reading. Use of a sheet of paper over the lines to be read helped develop a good left to right eye movement. As an encouragement to phrase reading, parts of the line were covered. His rate of reading was not accelerated to the detriment of his comprehension rate. The latter,

of course, is most important since most readers have a different reading speed in all content fields.

Case A now feels secure in reading and he enjoys reading. He also has a genuine interest in reading. This increased interest among pupils seems to be the main difference between the general and individualized reading methods. This conclusion was based on actual talks with A. He showed his interest by working hard in class and by taking his reader home to do extra assignments. He showed that he felt secure in reading by his willingness to read orally in all content subjects before all his classmates without any outward sign of fear or frustration.

#### CASE STUDY ON PUPIL B

This boy is an average student. Table II, page 33, substantiates this statement.

This boy comes from a good family. His father is an auditor. He has a younger sister. His parents are very interested in their school progress.

B is an average boy in all respects. He is very fond of sports and he plays well in them all. His father was also an all-around athlete, but both the boy and his father excel in baseball.

This boy has a nice personality and generally takes the "bitter" and "sweet" in stride. His musical background has also aided his personality.

TABLE II

## SCORES OF PUPIL "B" ON VARIOUS ACHIEVEMENT AND MENTAL TESTS

ACHIEVEMENT TESTS

## 1. Metropolitan Primary Reading Test

	Chronological		Grade Level on:		
	Age	Grade	Word Recognition	Word Meaning	Word Picture
7/2/48	8-10	1	2.8	1.6	1.7

## 2. California Achievement Test (Elementary)

Date	Chronological		Grade Level on:	
	Age	Grade	Reading Vocabulary	Reading Comprehension
4/14/53	12-11	6	7.4	6.6

## 3. Stanford Achievement (Form E)

Date	Chronological		Grade Level on:	
	Age	Grade	Paragraph Meaning	Word Meaning
4/23/53	13-0	6	6.8	5.9

## 4. Gates Reading Survey

Date	Chronological		Grade Level on:			
	Age	Grade	Compre- hension	Vocab. ulary	Reading Speed	Reading Accuracy
3/30/53	13-10	7	7.3	6.6	8.7	92%

MENTAL TESTS

	Date	C.A.	M.A.	I.Q.
1. Kulhmann Anderson	9/3/49	6-4	5-9	91
2. Kulhmann Finch	1/11/52	10-8	11-1	104
3. California Test of Mental Maturity	3/31/54	13-10	13-10	100

B is a hard worker and only three times in the past two and one-half years had he really "fooled around." He had trouble with English and, at first, hated reading.

This boy has many varied interests both in out-of-school activities and in books. However, in both, sports have held top interest.

To help B to become a better reader, the following were needed: (1) to show B that reading could be interesting and challenging; (2) to show him that he could succeed in reading once he became interested in it and tried harder to like it, and (3) to pin-point his reading difficulties.

A talk with his mother at a Parent-Teachers meeting revealed his interests. She said that he liked sports but felt helpless and frustrated when reading orally in front of the class. Furthermore, she said that he could not get interested in silent reading because it took him so long to finish a book. This was true even though his parents checked him daily to make sure he read at home each night.

So began the battle to make B like reading. Sport books were first used so as to get B to read for fun. Once B grasped the idea that reading was interesting, the battle was about half over. B was fortunate that he had parents who sacrificed part of their leisure time in order to help him with his reading. Otherwise, he could have built up a hatred of reading which might have stayed with him throughout



his entire life. To show that B has become interested in reading, this one incident will suffice -- B read nine books during February, 1954. His average amount of reading is about four books a month, and about sixty per cent of these books have no connection with sports of any kind.

To show B that he could succeed in reading, he was asked to read orally from a fourth grade reading text. It was then explained to him why he was at that level and how everything depended on him as far as improvement was concerned. He was also told not to feel badly about being two years behind in reading because he was that much further ahead of his classmates in baseball. Once B found that he was reading along without stumbling over every word, he began to improve in this skill, and as previously mentioned, really took an interest in trying to improve his reading ability. At the end of this study, B was able to read from an eighth grade book with satisfactory results in reading, and especially in comprehension.

In the beginning of the study, B's reading difficulties consisted of word-by-word reading, frequent insertions, skipping or guessing new or unfamiliar words, and very poor comprehension. In order to help B speed up his reading and to cut his insertions, a pacer was used. Thus, B was forced to stop his re-reading, and to read more by phrases than word-by-word. Furthermore, this helped B to double his oral

reading rate. For the first time, B was finding meaning in the printed symbols on the page. In order to help B understand new and difficult words, he was given help on syllabication so he could see the parts that make up each word. He also studied diacritical marks in order to find the different sound of letters as well as finding the different meanings a word has in different sentences. Finally, as B became familiar with reading and began to like it, his comprehension improved. A time pacer (so much time to read so far and answer certain questions) proved to be the incentive B needed in finding comprehension just an ordinary rather than a lifetime obstacle. This case of B proved that an individualized reading program assists children to find their interests in a more convenient way so as to push them forward without any undue strain. It also indicates that interest in reading is the incentive that can make poor readers good readers in one or two years and sometimes less.

#### CASE STUDY ON PUPIL C

This boy is a superior student with a superior intelligent quotient as is shown by Table III, page 37.

His father is a construction boss. He has an older brother. His home influence is very fine and his parents are deeply concerned about his school progress and, as a result, they cooperate in any possible way to help C to improve his school work.

TABLE III

## SCORES OF PUPIL "C" ON VARIOUS ACHIEVEMENT AND MENTAL TESTS

ACHIEVEMENT TESTS

## 1. METROPOLITAN PRIMARY READING TEST

Date	Chronological Age	Grade	Grade Level on:		
			Word Recognition	Word Meaning	Word Picture
6/2/48	7-2	1	3-0	2.8	1.9

## 2. CALIFORNIA ACHIEVEMENT TEST (ELEMENTARY)

Date	Chronological Age	Grade	Grade Level on:	
			Reading Vocabulary	Reading Comprehension
4/14/53	12-11	6	7.4	8.3

## 3. STANFORD ACHIEVEMENT (FORM E)

Date	Chronological Age	Grade	Grade Level on:	
			Paragraph Meaning	Word Meaning
4/23/53	13-0	6	8.5	8.1

## 4. GATES READING SURVEY

Date	Chronological Age	Grade	Grade Level on:			
			Compre- hension	Vocab- ulary	Reading Speed	Acc'y
3/30/53	13-11	7	8.4	9.0	8.5	97%

MENTAL TESTS

	Date	C.A.	M.A.	I.Q.
1. Kulhmann Anderson	9/3/49	6-5	6-9	105
2. Kulhmann Finch	1/11/52	10-9	12-4	115
3. California Test of Mental Maturity	3/31/54	13-11	14-10	115

C is an average boy in interests. He is very much interested in music and enjoys most sports. He is an avid reader and usually reads six books each month. During February, 1954, C read fifteen books. Among these were "Moby Dick" and "Jim of the Press." The latter book was over eight-hundred pages in length. His musical background has helped him in school and in extra-curricular activities. He also has a very adjustable personality and most children accept him as a member of the group.

C works very hard in school and is very useful as a "reading instructor." The material that he has prepared for his daily class assignments has on several occasions nearly overshadowed those of his teacher. His only difficulty in class is his "too helpful" attitude, which sometimes gets him and many of his classmates into trouble.

The reading problem of this boy involved keeping interest at a high level. His main problem was the lack of a vocabulary to go along with his rapid reading rate (which varied from four-hundred to nine-hundred words a minute depending upon the type of material being read). His work as a reading instructor forced him to build up a vocabulary by his own methods in order to help his classmates. He was also given opportunities to read supplementary material in encyclopedias and make oral reports to the class. These reports were made with charts and graphs. Another step that

helped improve C's vocabulary was in studying prefixes and suffixes. With a thorough mastery of these aids, he was able to recognize longer words and pick out the root words easier.

C's other problem was his foreign accent. To help him overcome this, he was introduced to phonetic sounds as well as diacritical marks and syllables and their accents. All these aids seemed to help C to speak in a clear distinct voice.

This case study of C showed that an individualized reading program can help superior readers keep an interest in reading because they are still reading material that is challenging.

## CHAPTER VI

### SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This was a two and one-half year study of a class in a Montana Public Elementary School on students whose ages differed by as much as two and one-half years. This study considered the methods and materials used to improve reading.

The paper describes informally the benefits of an individualized reading program as compared to those attributed to general reading program, as seen by the teacher of this class. It is hoped that some of the observed findings can be used to advantage by other teachers, who may have need of ideas with which to put across certain reading skills. The case studies used consisted of three boys. One had an inferior intelligence; another possessed an average intelligence; and the third boy had a superior intellect. Since the number examined was so small, the findings are only suggestive.

A brief resume' of the study's significant elements is as follows: (1) Each pupil's reading level was found; (2) Comprehension was stressed through the use of context clues together with phonetic analysis; (3) The child's progress was carefully observed; (4) Reading Speed through the use of "pacers" was stressed when a child showed real progress in comprehension skills and speed.

The case study datum suggested the following: (a) pupils tended to have a better attitude under the individualized reading program, (b) pupils developed a more genuine interest in reading, and (c) pupils gained new reading skills because of more attention to meaning.

The following is a brief summary of the case studies:

- (1) Case A had a low intelligent quotient. In the beginning of the study, his reading faults were: word-by-word reading, frequent reversals, poor word recognition, and a very slow reading rate, as well as poor recall. At the end of the study he had become a phrase reader who omitted most reversals and who began to recognize the basic words. He became a faster reader, though his word recall was still below average.
- (2) Case B was an average pupil. At the start of the study he had no interest in reading, and the most interesting stories failed to challenge him. Together with this, he had these reading difficulties: word-by-word reading, frequent insertions, no means of word attack, as well as a poor reading and comprehension rate. When the study was completed, B was interested in reading and he found it challenging. He was a good phrase reader who now had both a good reading and comprehension rate. He had nearly lost the habit of inserting, and his word recognition was average.
- (3) Case C had a superior intellect. When the study began, he was an above-average reader with a fast reading rate.

However, his vocabulary was far below his reading speed and his articulation was faulty. At the conclusion of the study, C had an adequate vocabulary to go along with his very rapid reading rate, and his articulation had improved. At the same time, his interest in reading was kept at a high level because the material he was reading still constituted a challenging experience.

The following are the tentative conclusions suggested:

1. The general reading program carried on by this teacher failed to enable slow learning and average pupils to gain a genuine interest in reading nor did it help pupils develop a favorable attitude toward reading. Furthermore, this type of reading program failed to take into account the individual differences of pupils.
2. Since an individualized reading program takes a child at his own reading level and provides him with books that he can read and understand at his level, some progress in reading is almost a certainty because the children become interested in an activity that was previously a waste of time and their attitude toward school changes for the best.

While working on this study some small items were noted that seemed to hinder pupils from gaining all the skills imbedded in any kind of reading program. In order to bring these skills into the reach of all pupils, the following recommendations are stated:



1. Parents should make sure that their children read at least twenty minutes daily throughout the summer vacation.
2. Reading textbooks and manuals from grades four through eight should be as complete in every detail in regards to old and new study skills as those reading textbooks and manuals in the primary grades.
3. In general, classes above 25 in number are hardly managed adequately by the average teacher.
4. School libraries should have an adequate number of books at each grade level that reflect children's interests.
5. Every reading teacher or teacher who teaches reading should have on hand reading manuals and reading texts on teaching reading. Several texts of such are listed in the Bibliography (see page 44).
6. Each school should avail themselves of content field books written at different levels. For example, in a sixth grade class, there should be books in all the content subjects which would have a vocabulary range from grades two through nine. Their purchase in regards to the number for each respective grade level could be based upon the informal type of test described in the study (see p. 14). Although this last recommendation may be idealistic, it would go a long way in preventing reading difficulties, and consequently reducing the number of remedial cases.

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