CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY, NORTHRIDGE

THE EFFECT OF A PRESCRIPTIVE READING PROGRAM
ON EIGHTH GRADE-REMEDIAL STUDENTS

A project submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Education

by

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS ........................................ iii
LIST OF TABLES ........................................ vi
ABSTRACT ............................................... vii

CHAPTER

I. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM .......................... 1
  Purpose
  Questions to be Answered
  Hypothesis
  Definitions
  Summary

II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE ..................... 10
  Studies in General Related to the
  Affective Areas in Reading
  Studies Related to Teacher Attitudes
  and Reading Instruction
  Studies Related to Self-Concept and
  Reading Instruction
  Studies Related to Grades and Reading
  Instruction
  Studies Related to the Teaching of
  Reading in an Individualized Setting
  Summary

III. METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS ....................... 39
  Overview
  Hypothesis
  Questions to be Answered
  Description of Population
  The Program
    Instrumentation
    Record-Keeping
    Orientation
    Materials
    Evaluative Process
    The Teacher
IV. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Questions to be Answered
Summary
Conclusions
Recommendations

REFERENCES

APPENDICES

A. Individual Weekly Program Card
B. Remedial Indicator Chart
C. Skills Placement Chart
# LIST OF TABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Table</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Iowa Test of Basic Skills-Form 3-Mean Grade Equivalent Achievement by Grade for Reading Sub-tests for El and Cl Schools</td>
<td>31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Iowa Test of Basic Skills-Form 3-Mean Grade Equivalent Achievement by Grade for Reading Sub-tests for E2 and C2 Schools</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.</td>
<td>Ethnic Distribution of Target School</td>
<td>41</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.</td>
<td>Comparison of Differences of Pre-test and Post-test Scores for Two Eighth-Grade Reading Groups</td>
<td>74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5.</td>
<td>Attitudinal Survey of Period One and Period Eight</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ABSTRACT

THE EFFECT OF A PRESCRIPTIVE READING PROGRAM
ON EIGHTH-GRADE REMEDIAL STUDENTS
by
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Master of Arts in Education
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This study investigated the effects of an individualized reading program for two eighth-grade remedial reading classes. The study was conducted in an intermediate school in the southern portion of Ventura County, California. The time period covered five months, spanning two semesters.

This prescriptive reading program intended to provide remediation for the students based upon diagnosis of individual deficiencies. Materials were used which were intended as individualized learning tools. Forms and procedures were devised to provide ease of use and record-keeping. Evaluative processes helped to keep student and teacher aware of progress and encouraged student participation.
Post-test results indicated some partial, measurable success in raising reading scores beyond an expected level and in having a positive effect on student attitudes. These results lead to no positive conclusions but do seem to indicate that further study is warranted.
CHAPTER I

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The purpose of this study is to describe how an individualized reading program can reverse failing attitudes and unsatisfactory academic performances of students.

The program which the author developed was a prescriptive, individualized approach. This approach centered around the creation of a skills laboratory within the classroom environment.

Introduction

One of the main problems that any teacher of reading has to recognize when dealing with secondary students who have experienced failure, is their lack of motivation. This failure is due in part to their experiences during previous years of school. Reich (1971) powerfully assailed the schools for their stultifying effect upon students. It would seem, according to Reich, difficult indeed for the students to improve in any area, including reading skills, if they felt deprived of an open, encouraging, comfortable environment for working with those things that were important to them. Without a sense of self and his needs, such a student would not be vitally concerned
with improving skills that a teacher would feel to be deficient.

In Crisis in the Classroom (1970), Silberman agreed with Reich regarding the school's harmful effect upon the individual:

Most of all, however, I am indignant of the failures of the public schools themselves. 'The most deadly of all possible sins,' Erik Erikson suggests, 'is the mutilation of a child's spirit.' It is not possible to spend any prolonged period visiting public school classrooms without being appalled by the mutilation everywhere—mutilation of spontaneity, of joy in learning, of pleasure in creating, of sense of self. The public school—those 'killers of the dream,' to appropriate a phrase of Lillian Smith's—are the kind of institution one cannot really dislike until one gets to know them well. Because adults take the schools so much for granted, they fail to appreciate what grim, joyless places most American schools are . . . [p. 10].

Herbert R. Kohl (1969), who has done much both in criticizing the schools and in pointing out a different way to go, said:

There is no one way to learn, nor are there specific stories or experiments all young people must go through. The notion that learning is orderly and ought to be identical for all pupils is wrong and in many ways pernicious. It leads to the notion of remedial work—i.e., the idea that students who have not followed the temporal sequence set up by the teacher have somehow failed and need remedial attention. Remedy for what? A child who has not learned to read does not need remedial work so much as his own way of learning something for the first time [p. 52].

Kohl felt that the teacher must be put in touch with the individual student and must realize that the students are unique and learn at different rates and in
different ways. Kohl felt that the poor reader needs to learn his own way of reading. But how does one learn to read? How should reading be taught?

With the general problems created by our present-day education practices as seen by these critics, and many others, existing as a backdrop, a more specific problem surrounding the teaching of reading exists. Ever since the publication of Rudolf Flesch's *Why Johnny Can't Read* (1955), the teaching of reading has been under tremendous attack. This attack has been minimized by those writers such as Nila Banton Smith (1961) and George D. Spache (1956), who have pointed out that there has been significant progress in reading instruction in this century.

Nevertheless, the consensus among reading experts points to a general frustration in such basic matters as the (1) defining of reading, (2) determining how one learns to read, and (3) methods that should be used in the teaching of reading. What a reading teacher discovers when he attempts to have these questions answered is that reading is a complex skill involving environmental, emotional, and intellectual factors, as well as auditory, visual, and perceptual skills, and that no one knows how learning takes place.

Regarding the question of methods, the teacher of reading is told that the teacher is much more important than any method, while behavioristic psychologists claim
that if one knows and follows "basic truths" regarding teaching and learning, then the teacher becomes of minor importance.

The National Society for the Study of Education in its forty-seventh Yearbook (1948), addressed itself to the problem of reading instruction:

A basic need today is to develop a sound reading program in high schools and colleges which recognizes (1) that growth in reading is continuous, (2) that the function of guidance in reading is to start with the student at his present level of reading ability, and (3) that it should carry him forward to higher levels of competence in learning with his capacity and the increasing demands made upon him when reading. Until notable progress has been made in providing students with appropriate stimulation and guidance, general education cannot make its largest contribution to the personal and social development of youth [p. 42].

While this might seem to be good advice, several crucial questions are raised regarding the meaning of "continuous;" how a teacher is supposed to deal with twenty to thirty students in a class at the student's own "level," and what is "appropriate stimulation" for a remedial reading student? It is the answers to these questions and others that will be discussed in this study.

**Purpose**

The purpose of the study is to describe a reading program that took place in classroom surroundings and that tried to emphasize both the cognitive and affective domain of learning. The nature of this study is exploratory to determine if the technique warrants further experimental
The purpose of the program was twofold in nature: one, to remediate through prescriptive diagnosis the skill areas in which the student was deficient; and two, to reverse negative attitudes toward reading and develop positive attitudes not only toward reading in particular, but to learning in general.

Questions to be Answered

The basic questions to this study were:

1. Will the use of prescriptive teaching result in a gain score for each student in the program?
2. Will the use of prescriptive teaching result in improved attitudes of the students toward themselves, school and reading?
3. What should be the teacher's role in this attempt to deal with the prescriptive teaching method and the attitudes of the students?
4. Will the guarantee of a high grade help the students to perform better?

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis of this study was that the prescriptive approach to individualized instruction within the classroom environment would produce no improvement in the following areas: reading skills, reading interest, academic achievement and attitude.
Definitions

1. Self-concept. "The term self-concept refers to all of the perceptions, ideas, and feelings which each person develops about himself--his physical characteristics, mental abilities and his acceptance by and influence upon others [Richardson, 1969, p. 108]."

2. Attitudes. Individual attitudes represent value systems which determine the scale of importance in reference to exterior circumstances and relationships. Learning then will be affected by a hierarchy of attitudes, some of which may be provided for in a classroom and some of which may not. This study addresses itself to attitudes which may be tested in classroom strategies.

3. Cognitive Domain. Refers to the activity of mind in knowing an object, or intellectual functioning. The cognitive domain includes what an individual learns and the intellectual process of learning. If what is learned is an attitude or value, then that would be what is known as affective domain.

4. Affective Domain. Refers to the feeling or emotional aspect of experience and learning. The affective domain includes a person's desire to learn, his feelings about how he learns, and what he feels after he has learned.

5. Prescriptive teaching. This refers to a method whereby the individual student's spectrum of skills is
analyzed through diagnostic procedures to provide remediation in required skills. An individualized prescription is prepared for each student. Students are then programmed into remedial material according to a hierarchy of priorities.

6. Remedial reading. Refers to "reading programs which are planned to teach (students) the specific reading skills they have failed to master, using the best methodology, materials, and motivations possible [Harris, 1970, p. 16]."

7. Independent reading level. "Refers to the highest level at which a child can read easily and fluently, without assistance, with few word recognition errors and very good comprehension and recall [Harris, 1970, p. 139]."

8. Instructional reading level. "Refers to the highest level at which the child can do satisfactory reading provided that he receives preparation and supervision from a teacher; word recognition errors are not frequent, and comprehension and recall are satisfactory [Harris, 1970, p. 139]."

9. Frustration reading level. "Refers to the lowest level at which the child's reading skills break down; fluency disappears, word recognition errors are numerous, comprehension is faulty, recall is sketchy, and signs of emotional tension and discomfort become evident [Harris, 1970, p. 139]."
10. **Diagnosis.** "Refers to a careful study of the reading difficulty to determine its nature and find out about its causation, with the aim of correcting or remedying the difficulty [Harris, 1970, p. 138]."

**Summary**

The program, which was the principle concern of this study, was conducted by the author in the school year 1972-73. The program concerned itself with the negative attitudes students had developed toward school and reading over seven years of formal education, and their lack of mastery of basic reading skills important to their learning. The major areas of concern regarding attitude were their attitudes toward the teacher of reading, attitudes of self-esteem and attitudes toward grades.

This study addresses itself primarily to whether a prescriptive reading method can improve a student's reading level, and reverse negative attitudes. It will also concern itself with the role of the teacher in a prescriptive reading program and how students perform when grades are not emphasized. In addition, there will be a discussion and description of the materials used, a listing of the skills being concentrated upon, and a reproduction of some of the forms devised for this particular program.

This study was undertaken in the hope that future researchers in the area of secondary reading programs
could use the materials set forth in this study. The author's concern for poor readers prompted both the program and the study.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

This survey of literature reviews studies on affective factors in reading as well as studies on reading programs whose aims coincide with the author's program.

The chapter is divided as follows:
1. Studies related to the affective factors in reading.
2. Teacher attitudes and reading instructions.
3. Student self-concept and reading instruction.
4. Studies related to grades and the student in reading instruction.
5. Studies related to the teaching of reading in an individualized setting.

Studies in General Related to the Affective Areas in Reading

In a paper presented at the 1969 International Reading Conference, Irene Athey (1969) made some very revealing comments:

Now in all studies by Holmes and his colleagues using the substrata model and technique, personality and attitudual factors failed to appear among those variables making a statistically significant contribution to the variance in reading.
Should we then conclude that affective factors make no contribution to reading ability? A survey of the literature on this question immediately belies such a conclusion. However when the sum of the contribution made by each of the selected variables is completed, approximately twenty-five percent of the variance in reading comprehension remains unexplained. They surmise that motivational factors, whether stable or temporary, may be operating, but these factors are other than those measured by the personality tests employed. As a matter of fact, the relationship between measured personality variables and reading is usually so tenuous as to prevent their appearance at any level of the analysis.

We do not as yet have personality measures corresponding to the standardized achievement test because the school has been much less concerned with the affective objective of education or the means to assess them [p. 5-6].

Athey (1969) goes on to say:

Thus if we consider an affective variable, say self-confidence, its role in the working system might be to enhance certain cognitive skills which in turn affects others, leading to improved performance in reading, which in turn leads to increased self-confidence [p. 6].

It is plain to see from these comments that Athey sees a direct relationship between the affective areas and the learning of reading. Athey's comments and research are very valid because she does not rule out the cognitive area of learning. What she demonstrates in her paper, citing over seventy studies, is the greater need to blend and use both the affective and cognitive styles of learning.

In an attempt to discover whether or not there
were differences in the self-concept of over-achievers and under-achievers in reading, Lumpkin (1966) matched groups of chronological age, mental age, sex, and home background.

The study revealed that over-achievers possessed significantly more positive self-concepts. These same over-achieving elementary school children also showed a higher level of adjustment and declared a liking for reading.

Lumpkin's study also stated that under-achievers had a predominantly negative perception of self. These students expressed feelings of conflict, a desire to be different as seen by themselves and were considered by teachers to have a high problem tendency.

One of Lumpkin's (1966) recommendations was that "practices be enjoyed which provide increased understanding of the child who expressed aggressive, withdrawing, and non-achieving behavior as a result of his concept of himself [p. 420]."

Sybil Richardson (1969) reports that children with negative self-concepts meet many challenges found at school with "resistance, reluctance, or apathy [p. 108]." Richardson states, "They are afraid to include themselves in new learnings which they sense may confirm their feelings of inadequacy and will only bring them further disapproval [p. 106]." This quotation points out the great need for
teachers to deal with students' problems before they deal with the lack of the ability to use decoding skills [p. 108]."

Studies Related to Teacher Attitudes and Reading Instruction

Research on the attitudes of teachers and their effect on learning has revealed very useful information for this study.

From an article by Sybil Richardson (1969), the following quotation focuses the extent of the present study:

At the same time the reflected appraisals of significant adults are used as additional data in the child's self-concept. Because the child's environment is restricted and because adults appear so wise and powerful, the reflected appraisals have a powerful influence upon the child's ideas and feelings about himself. Even when such appraisals are erroneous, they have a lasting effect upon the child's self-concept [p. 108].

A negative concept of self can be changed, although slowly, under two conditions: (1) warm and accepting relations with others and (2) freedom from anxiety arising from threat of de-enchantment. Fortunately the teacher is in almost complete control of these conditions in the classroom [p. 109].

In classrooms where teacher's comments convey reproofs and criticisms instead of praise and encouragement, the result will be anxiety and uneasiness. This in turn reduces the children's confidence in their own abilities. Herein seems to lie the secret to teacher-motivated learning.
The literature in the field of teacher attitudes constantly refers to what the teacher can do in the classroom. This recurring theme seems to indicate how greatly teachers influence the total development of a positive self-concept (Erikson, 1950).

A study conducted by Davidson and Land (1965) also tried to show how the self-concept is influenced in a classroom. Their study attempted to correlate the relationship between children's perception of their teacher's feelings toward them and the children's perception of themselves, academic achievement and classroom behavior. The results showed a positive correlation on all three measures.

The investigators conclude that the teacher's feelings of acceptance and approval are picked up by the student and seen by him as positive appraisal. This acceptance by the teacher leads to having the student want to achieve more for further approval.

Studies Related to Student Self-Concept and Reading Instruction

Studies presented in the following section show that self-concept plays an important role in learning experience, and that self-concept plays an important role in reading instruction.

For the purpose of this study, the terms "self-concept," "self-esteem," are interchangeable and defined
as follows:

The term self-concept refers to all of the perceptions, ideas, and feelings which each person develops about himself—his physical characteristics, mental abilities, and his acceptance by, and influence upon others [Richardson, 1969, p. 108].

Once an atmosphere that includes acceptance and freedom from anxiety has been structured, a very slow improvement in self concept will result (Richardson, 1969).

In this atmosphere of acceptance and relief from anxiety, the student will be rid of negative comments. Staines' (1965) experiment in which one teacher emphasized this as a major goal proved that students did improve their self-concept. Staines (1965) did state that the self is a factor in all learning experiences.

Students in the classroom of junior high school are going through stages of later adolescence. "At this stage of development—between about fifteen and eighteen years of age—the individual tends to be keenly concerned with his self-image [Rosenberg, 1965, p. 20]." Some of the questions these students ask are: What am I like? How good am I? On what basis shall I judge myself? Because these very important questions are in the minds of these students, continual failure can be very damaging. A student searching for answers to "What am I like?" may be told in many ways by significant adults that he is a failure. This student will soon make failure his own self-image (Rosenberg, 1965).
Fromm-Reichmann (1960) has suggested that anxiety is manifested by: (1) interference with thinking processes and concentration, (2) a frequently objectless feeling of uncertainty and helplessness, (3) intellectual and emotional preoccupation, and (4) blocking of communication.

Rosenberg (1965) in his study of 5,024 high school juniors and seniors from ten high schools in New York State, identifies as one result of anxiety the factor of vulnerability. Rosenberg concludes that a person with low self-esteem (poor self-concept) would "be inordinately sensitive to any evidence in the experience of his daily life which testified to his inadequacy, incompetence, or worthlessness [p. 110]."

Four specific areas of vulnerability manifested by people with low self-esteem (self-concept) are:

(1) much more likely to be sensitive to criticism, to be deeply disturbed when they are laughed at, scolded, blamed, criticized, etc.; (2) much more likely to be bothered if others have a poor opinion of them; (3) much more likely to be disturbed when they become aware of some fault or inadequacy in themselves [Rosenberg, 1965, p. 109].

The research literature suggests that good readers have more positive self-concepts than poor readers (Lumpkin, 1966). Not only do better readers exhibit more positive self-concepts, students in grades one through nine who are better readers show feelings of adequacy and personal worth, self-confidence and self-reliance. The opposite is true for poor readers. These poor readers tend
to be characterized by immaturity, impulsiveness, and negative feelings concerning themselves and their world (Bodwin, 1957; Schwyhart, 1967).

Studies Related to Grades and Reading Instruction

The purpose of this section is to establish a basis for negating the anxiety brought about by competition for grades in the reading classroom.

In a study conducted with college students to compare a graded and non-graded class, Reid (1970) used a control group and an experimental group. The control group was evaluated by the traditional A B C D F. The experimental group was only evaluated on a Pass-Fail system. Reid did state that he observed an atmosphere in the Pass-Fail graded class which was more relaxed and free of grade-oriented tensions than he found in the regularly graded class. The by-product of the Pass-Fail grading, according to Reid, seemed to be that it resulted in the instructor's perception of increased rapport between himself and his students.

Melby (1966) stated that he felt grades should be set aside because they put too much emphasis on limited goals and do not put emphasis on future learning. Melby also felt that grades too often reinforced failure whereas educators should be developing the positive self-concept of the child which promotes not drop-outs, but future
Haskel (1967) felt that the goal of a Pass-Fail system was to free the student from an arbitrarily fixed grade and substitute a self-motivation that would lead him into an attainment level that he might reach under the pressure imposed by a letter grade. Haskell also reported that the Pass-Fail system was not installed in his school without first checking with colleges which students would possibly be entering upon completion of high school. The answers received from the colleges encouraged and welcomed the experiment in the Pass-Fail system.

Kingston (1966) reported that research seemed to show that parents and students preferred a traditional report system (Morris, 1952; Yuch, 1961; Richardson, 1969; Kingston and Wash, 1966). This seemed to indicate that since the reading classroom has students routed to it because of low ability in reading, any grading system based upon a comparison of students' reading achievement inevitably means the bulk of the grades will be C's, D's or F's. Reading specialists point has been academic growth. Since the reading classroom tends to reflect comparisons between children and that the reference point has been academic growth, Kingston (1966) also pointed out that a study by Anderson (1966) suggested our grading systems tend to accurately assess the amount of learning which has occurred and what seems to be the future of learning.

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all seem to agree that remedial work should be highly individualized. The establishment of identical goals for all students, therefore, should be avoided at all costs (Kingston, 1966).

Because the reading teacher is forced to give a grade, he must administer a diagnostic examination to establish a point of reference and to gauge progress. Since the reading process and the reading disability is so complex, the reading teacher often does not have a true point of reference. Then, because he is forced to grade, he will subjectively assign a grade to satisfy the system (Kingston, 1966).

Many times the assignment of grades is based on the degree of cooperation shown by the reading student. Since many poor learners are behavioral problems, the end result is a poor grade based more on negative attitudes toward remediation of a reading problem (Kingston, 1966).

Boyd (1965) suggested an alternative to traditional reporting practices. She suggested that more school personnel use phone conversations with parents, correspondence, parent-teacher interviews and the systematic transmission of samples of student's work home to parents.

**Studies Related to the Teaching of Reading in an Individualized Setting**

The primary concern in this section is to show that meeting individual needs is basic for eliminating
poor reading habits. In a program devised to help the student individually, the teacher must accept two postulates:

1) Each student is different.
2) Each student can make progress when provided with reading experiences at his own level.

In formulating a good reading program, the reading teacher will always exert himself:

1. To offer a readiness program . . . build up to a harder word; incorporate other subjects into the reading; test student to find his deficiencies.

2. To motivate the subject or the lesson, use audio-visual materials, but most important--use the reader's own personality.

3. To use materials with which the student will find success.

4. To emphasize wide reading--many books for recreational and informational purposes. When the child reads for his own pleasure and information, maximum reading success will be achieved.

5. To consider reading an all-day responsibility.

6. To take every opportunity offered to gain independence in word recognition and the pronunciation of new words.

7. To use repetition to develop and to build new vocabulary.

8. To use exercises to help comprehension by use of seat work, workbooks, questions, conversation to emphasize comprehension skills [Tremonti, 1970, p. 229-230].

The following studies emphasize the method of individualization in the classroom. This method represents a break from the traditional classroom structure. It forms
what is more or less known as an "open classroom." Herbert R. Kohl, in his work, The Open Classroom (1969), presented an invaluable guide for anyone considering breaking from the traditionally-run classroom. He stated:

A teacher who is trying to be bold and creative may find himself in one case allied with parents against the majority of other teachers and administrators, and in the other case find few allies apart from the students. In either case there will be no neutral position for the teacher and, therefore, he ought to be prepared for political confrontation [p. 95].

Perhaps the term "political confrontation" is overly dramatic, and an unfamiliar frame of reference for an elementary or secondary teacher, yet Kohl's appraisal of the situation should be understood by any teacher attempting to set up an open classroom. He states:

There are several ways to experiment in the classroom. It depends on who the teacher is. One ought not to try something basically incompatible with one's personality. It is likely to cause frustration and hostility, and to make further experimentation seem more dangerous than it really is. A crucial thing to realize is that changing the nature of life in the classroom is no less difficult than changing one's own personality, and every bit as dangerous and time-consuming. It is also rewarding [p. 69-70].

In this book, Kohl offered comments that he thought would be helpful. He did not attempt to offer a model, feeling that each teacher must create his own classroom. He did present what others have done, and generally pointed out problems a teacher might encounter.

In 1959 and 1960, Jane T. Sprague taught remedial
reading at Thomas A. Edison Junior High School in Los Angeles, California and reported her results in mimeographed form (1959-1960). Sprague was well-known in the Los Angeles area and her approach to teaching remedial reading on the secondary level, as well as her results, deserve consideration. Her approach was to emphasize individualized instruction and she did present some statistical evidence for the success of her method.

Sprague worked with one hundred and one seventh-graders who had taken the Stanford Reading Test, Advanced Form M, in March of 1959. When the semester began in September, she explained to them candidly, what the results of this pre-test were, and told them that they could improve their scores drastically if they would do one thing; read for one hour a day throughout the semester. She spent two days at the beginning of the semester discussing all the books in the room, as well as having the students openly express their attitude toward reading, toward their parents, and toward school. Sprague heard their feelings, and accepted them. Then, with this rapport established, and the books presented, she allowed the students to choose the book they would start on. The reading, at this point, had to be done in class, and any book could be returned if it proved to be uninteresting to the reader.

Sprague worked separately with the readers who
were having extreme difficulty, by having them read to
her. She generally described two remedies: to read more
slowly and to rely on phonics.

She appealed to the students' self-esteem, telling
them that they were not reading children's books which
presented the points obviously but rather were reading
books which demanded more concentration because the books
made their points by implication.

After the class had developed their concentration
and were able to sustain the period of silent reading,
Sprague allowed the students to take the books home. As a
book was finished, she asked the student what he felt
about it and entered this in her rollbook.

Toward the end of the semester, the students' at-
titudes toward reading seemed to change for they all could
enter the class, find a book, and read all period. Sprague,
too, would read at her desk, feeling that this aided their
concentration.

The post-test was administered in January, 1960.
The mean scores on the pre-tests and post-tests were as
follows: pre-test word meaning, 5.25; paragraph meaning,
5.00; post-test word meaning, 6.53; paragraph meaning,
7.03. The expected gain in the seven months would be .7;
however, the students gained 1.28 in word meaning and 2.02
in paragraph meaning.
While the statistics presented were relatively unsophisticated and no evidence for change of attitude could be substantiated except by inference, and further, no control group was used; nevertheless, it seemed that an increase in some reading skills could be gained by a teacher who was honest with the students and who stepped back from the classroom scene to allow the students to choose books on their own, read them without pressure, and not be assigned book reports or given tests. It would seem that this approach to the teaching of reading might well be emulated by others and that, furthermore, a teacher who was unwilling to change the classroom completely into an open classroom might find security as well as a sense of accomplishment by trusting that improvement in reading could be obtained by simply letting the students read.

In Hooked on Books: Program and Proof (1968), Daniel Fader proposed a school situation in which there could be "English in Every Classroom" and while many administrators claim that "all teachers are English (and reading) teachers," Fader would make this a reality. All teachers would surround the students with attractive publications that would be read, principally paperbound books, magazines and newspapers; and he would remove the traditional texts. The teacher would have the attractive books available and would insist that writing be done on a daily basis. Fader believed that through constant
writing and constant reading one would become, if not proficient, then at least greatly improved in both areas.

Fader set up his program at the W. J. Maxey Boy's Training School in Michigan. He was fortunate in finding generous book distributors who donated thousands of paper-bound books, so that the curriculum could be based around them. Since this school was not a public one, where there were no state-mandated curriculum requirements, Fader had free rein as to what and how the materials would be presented. Fader went to work in his experiment in this unusual setting, treating the students as human beings, being on their level, encouraging them to read varied books, and to write about anything, even if the students would copy words from a book. Over everything else in this program, the students were praised for whatever they accomplished.

For the statistical comparisons, another midwestern training school was used as the control group. Much of the statistical data dealt with the attitudes of teachers based upon the race of the student. The students were given attitudinal tests, which dealt with their attitudes towards school, reading, and themselves. Their academic development was measured by a test of verbal proficiency which Fader and McNeil devised. Essentially, it consisted of writing as much as a student could about five open-ended topics (e.g., "Write all the uses you can think of..."
for tin cans, bottles, or milk cartons) [p. 200]."

The application of these results to a regular public school are uncertain. In the report of the program given by Fader, there is no question but that the students were treated as human beings and were given every opportunity to pursue leisure reading and writing and to be certain of receiving nothing but praise for their efforts. Thus, it was not surprising that their attitudes about school and themselves improved.

Friedman (1964) attempted to compare the relative effectiveness of the reading-for-pleasure program with that of the traditional skill-oriented program in producing reading improvement in the areas of silent reading ability and oral reading ability as well as improvement in their attitude toward reading and their self-concept. In the reading-for-pleasure program, the students read newspapers and stories, produced skits with a minimum of teacher participation, and had no direct instruction in reading skills. In the skill-oriented program there was maximum teacher involvement in the instruction and techniques for increasing such basic reading skills as word attack, vocabulary, and comprehension.

The sample consisted of one hundred and sixteen students retarded at least one and one-half years in the junior high school. Twenty-two matched pairs were selected from the sample on the basis of socio-economic status, sex,
I.Q., and silent reading ability. Experimental controls employed included random assignment of teachers to the program, conferences with the teachers, published program descriptions, and periodic visits to the classes by the investigator. The test-retest interval was fifteen weeks.

The essential findings and conclusions of the program were that the reading-for-pleasure program and skill-oriented program were equally effective in producing reading improvement. Improvement of basic reading skills was obtained in the reading-for-pleasure program despite lack of direct instruction in these skills. A recommendation was that "despite current opinion to the contrary, the potential contribution of less formal, less authoritarian approaches to the education of lower socio-economic students should be considered [p. 511]."

Friedman's study was over only a short period of time, approximately equivalent to one semester, and it seemed to have good controls. The conclusion regarding the reading-for-pleasure program might give some support to a teacher who is attempting to set up a more informal type of program similar to one designed by Fader or Sprague; however, no results were reported for the change in attitude toward reading or the students' self-concept.

During the 1964-1965 school year a new instructional system was introduced to the students and faculty of the Oakleaf Elementary School of the Baldwin-Whitehall
School District in suburban Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. It was sponsored by the Learning Research and Development Center at the University of Pittsburgh. This instructional system bore the label Individually Prescribed Instruction (IPI). In a paper presented to the meeting of the International Reading Association in Atlantic City, New Jersey, Joseph De Renzis (1971) discussed the effects of individually prescribed instruction in reading as compared to the traditional mode of instruction.

The research involved individually prescribed instruction in reading, math, and science. Participating teachers and the research center personnel cooperatively stated instructional objectives in behavioral terms. The objectives were sequences in view of student performance criteria. Instructional materials for reading, as well as math and science, that supported accomplishment of an objective were selected from those available commercially or were prepared by teachers and the research center personnel.

Pupil evaluations in this project were continuous and included general placement tests, periodical pre-testing of specifics, and periodical post-testing of specifics. Teachers were taught how to examine pupil data, make evaluations, and subsequently write instructional prescriptions for groups and individual pupils. An evaluation staff supervised the collection of pupil data, the processing of pupil data, and the evaluation of curriculum materials and tests.
Major instructional emphasis in reading was placed on knowledge, habits, skills and abilities that could be behaviorally defined and measured. A portion of the prescriptive instruction seemed to be related to use of work-type pages of material extracted from commercial sources or prepared by teaching and research personnel.

The teachers who were responsible for writing the students' prescriptions were given the following data about each student: a) background information such as age, family and past achievement; b) placement profiles; and c) pre-test profiles. From an analysis of the teacher prescriptions, the following conclusions were reached:

1. Pre-test information was the most useful single type of data.

2. The prescriptions reflect teacher estimates and evaluations based on data available.

3. Prescriptions, typically, include the teacher's speculations about necessary degrees of practice and review for concept mastery.

The actual study involved four schools; two schools were involved in the Individually Prescribed Instruction (IPI) (Schools E1 and C1) and the other two acted as control groups (Schools E2 and C2). The study took place in grades three through six.

Schools E1 and C1 were located in a rural suburban section of eastern Pennsylvania. The Iowa Test of Basic
Skills was administered to pupils in grades three through six in both schools in the Spring of 1970.

At the time of the administration of the test, the test norm for each respective grade was 3.6, 4.6, 5.6 and 6.6. Using the test norm as the minimum criterion, in the El group all but three of the eight grade equivalent means were equal to or higher than the criterion. On a comparison basis, it could be seen that the IPI pupil earned mean grade equivalent scores equal to or higher than the non-IPI pupils in half the cases. (See Table 1).
TABLE 1

IOWA TEST OF BASIC SKILLS - FORM 3 -
MEAN GRADE EQUIVALENT ACHIEVEMENT BY
GRADE FOR READING SUB-TESTS
FOR E1 AND C1 SCHOOLS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>TEST</th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VOCABULARY</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E2 IPI</td>
<td>C2 NON-IPI</td>
<td>E1 IPI</td>
<td>C1 NON-IPI</td>
<td>DIFF.</td>
<td>E1 IPI</td>
<td>C1 NON-IPI</td>
<td>DIFF.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>64</td>
<td>4.0</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>-.3</td>
<td>3.3</td>
<td>3.7</td>
<td>-.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>71</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.8</td>
<td>-.1</td>
<td>4.7</td>
<td>4.5</td>
<td>+.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>102</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>-.2</td>
<td>5.3</td>
<td>4.9</td>
<td>+.4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>99</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>6.3</td>
<td>+.5</td>
<td>6.8</td>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>+1.2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Schools E2 and C2 were located in an urban setting in south-central Pennsylvania. In both schools the populations represented that group known as "culturally disadvantaged." The Iowa Test of Basic Skills was administered to pupils in grades three through six in both schools in the Spring of 1970. The results for the Vocabulary and Reading Comprehension Tests, reported as mean grade equivalents, are shown in Table 2.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Grade</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>TEST</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>VOCABULARY</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>E2 IPI</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>68</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td></td>
<td>57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td></td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It can be seen that neither group earned the minimum test norm. More significant, however, is the fact that in all cases the IPI pupils earned mean grade equivalent scores equal to or higher than the non-IPI pupils.

Pupil attitude was measured through the use of an attitudinal survey using such items as: Reading a book is . . . ; Learning to read new words . . . ; My reading class is . . . .

The over-all results of the study with regard to teachers were:

1. They have positive attitudes toward reading under IPI.
2. They used data to make decisions.
3. There was a change in their behavior in working with the students.
4. They provided valuable feedback for improving the system.

The results found in the students were:
1. They achieved as well or better than non-IPI students on standardized tests.
2. They achieved higher than non-IPI students on IPI tests.
3. They had a positive attitude toward school and learning.
4. They demonstrated a change in social behavior.

The evidence brought out by Dr. De Renzis' (1971) paper leaves some unanswered questions. Although mean grade equivalent scores from experimental and control classes grades three through six in rural-surburban and a similar pattern of urban schools and scores are presented, there is no way of knowing what variables are operating that may affect the scores as much as the IPI. The author believes that educational technology can be only as effective as the teacher's skill in employing it despite the emphasis IPI places on pupil self-learning.

Another factor to consider is the superior gain of the urban "culturally disadvantaged" group over the rural-surburban group. It has been found that "culturally
disadvantaged" groups will react more favorably to individualized methodology because of the fact that they are "culturally disadvantaged."

Chapter Summary
Affective Areas in Reading

In the attempt to document the general research that proves a need for further study in the area of the affective domain in reading, the studies mentioned in this section are important. Their importance revolves on the assumption that good readers, achievers in learning, have characteristic traits which can be identified and remediated by teachers.

1. Twenty-five percent of the variance in reading comprehension remains unexplained in Holmes' substrata model and technique (Athey, 1964).

2. More should be known about aggressive, withdrawing and non-achieving behavior (Lumpkin, 1966).

3. New learning is difficult for students who feel inadequate and who failed in the past (Richardson, 1969).

The preceding points are repeated in this summary because they emphasize the need for further study to prove the ability to identify and use the affective factors in reading.
Teacher Attitude and Reading Instruction

The following generalizations are warranted from the review of the literature discussed in this section of the chapter:

1. Teachers contribute to the self-concept of a student in a way very much related to the way in which a parent does and maybe even more significantly, particularly on the intermediate and secondary levels (Richardson, 1969).

2. Teachers affect the long-term development of self-concepts (Richardson, 1969).

3. Teachers can bring about positive change in the ability of the student to learn by teaching to the self-image of the student (Erikson, 1950).

4. Children are motivated to do more work by positive reinforcement (Davidson and Land, 1965).

Self-Concept and Reading Instruction

1. Low self-concepts make future learning repulsive to the learner (Richardson, 1969).

2. Self-concept improves in an atmosphere of acceptance and freedom from anxiety (Richardson, 1969).

3. The self is a factor in all learning experiences (Staines, 1965).

4. The ages, fifteen to eighteen, early adolescence, represent a crucial time in the growth of a self-concept (Rosenberg, 1965).
5. Anxiety in learners is identifiable (Fromm-Reichmann, 1960).

6. Anxiety leads to identifiable traits of vulnerability (Rosenberg, 1965).

7. Good readers have more positive self-concepts (Lumpkin, 1966).

8. Poor readers have noticeable traits of poor self-concepts (Bodwin, 1957; Schwyhart, 1967).

Grades and Reading Instruction

1. Research on non-traditional grading systems is scarce (Kingston, 1966).

2. Non-graded classes allow for freedom from anxieties brought on by grades (Reid, 1970).

3. Non-graded classes allow for greater rapport between student and teacher (Reid, 1970).

4. Grades may emphasize limited goals (Melby, 1966).

5. The Pass-Fail system may create more self-motivation in the student (Haskell, 1967).

6. Some colleges welcome the Pass-Fail system (Haskell, 1967).

7. Students and parents seem to prefer traditional grading systems (Kingston and Wash, 1966; Morris, 1952; Yauch, 1961; Richardson, 1960).

8. Identical goals for all reading students as a point of reference for grading is undesirable (Anderson,
1966).

9. Diagnostic reading tests may not result in a reliable point of reference for grading (Kingston, 1966).

Teaching Reading in an Individualized Setting

General observations that can be made from these studies seem to indicate that there was not too much significant difference in reading achievement whether the method used was individualized or if it was teacher-planned or group-structured. On the other hand, the studies tended to indicate that the students who were involved in individualized pupil-planned activities seemed to gain a better attitude toward reading. However, not very reliable instruments were used to determine this but, rather, inferences, observations, and tallying the number of books read by the students. What seemed to be needed was an attitudinal test which could convincingly indicate that the attitudes of the pupils toward reading changed. Many of the studies which seemingly attempted to deal with attitudes frequently reported nothing at all in this area, and nothing was indicated regarding the attitudes of the children toward school or toward themselves except in the case of Fader. However, due to the nature of the institution involved in his study, his results seemed questionable in their applicability to the public school.

On the whole, an individualized, informal approach
seemed to produce results in achievement on a level equal to a more planned approach, with perhaps a slight benefit in this area going to the more structured approach.

Some of the results were contradictory and from them a reader would have great difficulty in finding definitive proof to indicate that one method was better than another. On the basis of experience, to date, however, it should be apparent that no one innovation or method can meet the needs of all pupils and should not, therefore, be adopted as the sole curriculum or instructional method.
CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY AND FINDINGS

Overview

This chapter presents the methods, materials and statistical data necessary for statistical comparison.

The data was used primarily to show the improvement in the reading scores of two classes viewed separately rather than as one total group.

The discussion of the teacher's role, student attitudes toward themselves, school, reading and grading will also be presented in this chapter.

Hypothesis

The null hypothesis of this study was that the prescriptive approach to individualized instruction within a classroom environment would produce no improvement in the following areas: reading skills, reading interest, academic achievement, and attitude.

Questions to be Answered

The basic questions to this study were:

1. Will the use of prescriptive teaching result in a gain score for each student in the program?
2. Will the use of prescriptive teaching result in improved attitudes of the students toward themselves, school, and reading?

3. What should be the teacher's role in this attempt to deal with prescriptive teaching method and the attitudes of the students?

4. Will the guarantee of a high grade help the students to perform better?

Description of Population

The school where the study took place was an intermediate school situated in the southern portion of Ventura County, California. The school is situated within a suburban middle-class community. The intermediate school encompassed the seventh and eighth grades. In 1972-73 the student body numbered 785 boys and girls. The ethnic make-up of the student body of the intermediate school was primarily Caucasian (see Table 3).
The surrounding area from which the school draws its enrollment contains numerous housing tracts and some apartments. The cost of the tract homes range from $26,000 to $100,000.

Reading and English classes in this school were separated and all students were required to take a class in each of these disciplines with a high probability of presenting students, remedial and otherwise, with different approaches of reinforcement in the same skill areas. The reading and English classes in this school were grouped according to ability.

The school involved had a successful reading laboratory in which the students, selected on the basis of need and teacher recommendation, received fourteen weeks of highly concentrated, individualized work in groups of eight.
for fourteen weeks and thus were not subjected to the pro-
gram described in this study for the full five months.
Also, some students were transferred to higher reading
groups on the basis of their pre-test scores, while others
transferred to different schools due to the mobility and
employment demands of their families. It should be empha-
sized, however, that the students involved in the pre-test
were the same as those involved in the post-test.

The Program

The program referred to in this paper was developed
for two eighth-grade remedial reading classes who were
found to be lacking in comprehension and word attack
skills. The reading scores of these classes ranged from
2.9 to 7.3 as determined by the Nelson Reading Test, Form
B. With such a wide range in scores, and deficiencies in
numerous skill areas, the author felt a program providing
for the individual needs of each student would be more
beneficial to the student and would accomplish the desired
effect of improving reading scores and attitudes.

The program referred to was prescriptive in its
approach. The term "prescriptive" is defined for the pur-
poses of this study as a method whereby the individual stu-
dent's spectrum of skills is analyzed through diagnostic
procedures to provide remediation in required skills.

A prerequisite for determining remediation was to
isolate the skills with which the program would be involved.
A survey of the materials available to the program resulted in a listing of twenty-three comprehension skills and thirteen word attack skills. The Skilpacer's Kit provided the basis for the first fifteen of the twenty-three comprehension skills with the remaining materials either overlapping or adding to the list of skills.

The comprehension skills that were identified were:

1. Finding the main idea (whole selection).
2. Finding the main idea (paragraph).
3. Finding the main idea (sentence).
4. Recalling factual detail.
5. Following sequence of events.
6. Locating the answers.
7. Predicting answers and outcomes.
8. Cause and effect relationships.
9. Reference skills.
10. Summarizing.
11. Skimming and scanning.
12. Grouping and categorizing.
13. Picture interpretation and non-text clues.
15. Understanding character.
16. Reference.
17. Relationships of time and space.
18. Analogy.
20. Mood.
21. Fact, fiction, or opinion.
22. Following written instructions.
23. Speed reading.

The Wordpacer's Kit provided the basis for the first ten of the thirteen word attack skills with additional
materials overlapping or adding to the list. The thirteen word attack skills that were identified were:

1. Idioms.
2. Synonyms.
3. Antonyms.
5. Roots.
6. Prefixes.
7. Suffixes.
8. Contractions, possessives, plurals.
11. Syllables.
12. Syntax and punctuation.
13. Word endings.

The intent of this program was to provide reading laboratory methodology in a classroom situation. Reading laboratory methodology is by its nature individualized and based on diagnostic procedures. However, a reading laboratory is usually limited to a smaller number of students, whereas the total number of students in the classes involved in this study represented a much larger population.

While individualization was considered to be a worthwhile and necessary instructional method, the program did not preclude the use of group or class activities. The program was set up to operate three days each week with Monday and Friday of each week left open for group-oriented activities. It was found that large segments of the class were lacking in the same skills, so the author devised
group activities to reinforce those skills. For example, with regard to the skill of identifying the main idea within a paragraph, colored transparencies were used with the overhead projector. The students took turns reading the paragraphs orally and identifying, and in some cases, supplying the main idea. These group-oriented activities also included reading plays aloud and taping them, reading poetry aloud, language experience activities, and participation in word games involving words from the Dolch Word List.

An important consideration in reserving two days a week for group activities was to provide each student with the opportunity to function in a normal classroom environment and to give the student a chance to interact with his peers.

The successful administration of this prescriptive reading program depended upon the following: the teacher's knowledge of the individual needs of the students as determined by testing and diagnosis; an efficient record-keeping system; sufficient orientation to enable the student to work independently and individually with the materials available; the materials used; and the evaluative process.
Instrumentation

Two diagnostic instruments were used in this study, the Nelson Reading Test, Forms A and B, and the Wordpacer's Diagnostic Test. In November, 1972, the Nelson Reading Test, Form B, was administered to the students. The total score was used to determine which students were to be placed in a higher group and which students were to remain in the remedial group. This score was also used as a pre-test score. It was important to determine the reading level of each student so that materials of the proper level of difficulty could be assigned to him.

The Nelson Reading Test was chosen because it is designed for use in grades three through nine and was readily administered in a single class period. The normal working time was thirty minutes plus whatever time was needed to distribute and collect the test materials and to give the directions.

Another reason for the utilization of the Nelson Reading Test was that each reading comprehension paragraph is followed by three questions dealing with three major comprehension skills: (1) one pertaining to its general significance; (2) one pertaining to knowledge of detailed information contained therein; and (3) one planned to assess the ability to predict probable outcomes from the situation depicted in the paragraph. This design enabled the author to use the test not only as an indication of
reading level but as a diagnostic tool as well. The ques-
tions each student missed on the comprehension portion
were tallied according to the three skills mentioned above.
In this way, the author received a good indication of
which of these skills the student was deficient in and
could program him accordingly. If the score on the com-
prehension portion was low but the student was accurate,
the number of questions he completed was taken into con-
sideration. Usually there were fewer questions completed
thus indicating a problem with reading speed rather than
a skill deficiency. These students were referred to the
reading laboratory where they had the opportunity to work
on the controlled reader to improve their reading speed.

Another test that was used to determine the skills
the student needed was the Wordpacer's Diagnostic Test.
This test comes with a programmed kit called Wordpacers,
published by Random House. The Wordpacer's Kit deals
mainly with word attack skills. The ten skills involved
in this test included all the skills covered by the Word-
pacer's Kit. They are:

1. Context Clues.
2. Idioms.
3. Synonyms.
4. Antonyms.
5. Homonyms.
6. Contractions, possessives, and plurals.
7. Roots.
8. Prefixes.


The test involved ten multiple choice questions for each of the ten skills. It was administered over a period of two days, five tests each day. According to the guidelines given in the Teacher's Manual, the students who scored from one through seven were considered deficient in that skill area and thus should be programmed into the appropriate skill. Those who received from eight to ten points were not to be considered deficient in that skill.

The two tests, the Nelson Reading Test, Form B, and the Wordpacer's Diagnostic Test were the basic tools used for diagnosing the needs of the students involved in this program. The Nelson Reading Test, Form A, was used as a post-test and was administered in April, 1973.

In April, 1973, a test was given to measure the attitude of the students. It was a survey devised by the author and divided into three major categories. These categories were attitudes toward grades, attitudes toward self, and attitude toward teachers. There were several items listed underneath each of these categories. The student reflected his opinion by placing a check under the words "agree" or "disagree" next to each item. The students were not asked to identify themselves on the attitudinal survey so that they could feel free to state
their opinions.

Record-keeping

Any program dealing with individualization requires an efficient record-keeping system. As a result of the number of students involved in this program, the author found it necessary to devise several forms which were necessary to the management of the program.

The Individual Weekly Program Card was the backbone of the program (see Appendix A). The card itself was a 5" x 8" index card with the name of the student across the top, the period in which the student was placed and the number of his row. Along with this information appeared the pre-test score of that student broken down into vocabulary, comprehension and total. There was space provided for the post-test score. The intent was to acquaint the student with his score at the outset and with post-test score upon completion of the program.

The card was divided into five columns. One was labeled "date" in which the date of the week was recorded. The second, third, and fourth columns were labeled "Tuesday," "Wednesday," and "Thursday" respectively. The last column was labeled "Evaluation." On the back of the card at the bottom were two lines labeled "Comprehension" and "Word Attack" with a group of numbers after each one.

Each week, the author would record the date in the first column and then proceed to write the student's three-
day program in the proper column. As the student completed each item assigned, it was his responsibility to check it off thus indicating that the work was completed. Any item that was not checked off was re-programmed for the following week. A line was drawn under each week's program to keep them separated for ease in reading and to avoid confusion. Absences were recorded on the cards for the particular day, and the student was re-programmed for the same work the following week. The evaluation column was used to record dates and scores of criterion-referenced tests. It was also used by the teacher for notes regarding programming or to inform the student of procedures he might not be following. The student also used this column to inform the teacher of the ease or difficulty of the assigned work, or his preference regarding the assigned work.

The two lines on the back of the card labeled "Comprehension" and "Word Attack" were used to keep track of the skills the student needed, in what priority they were needed, and when they were completed. The skills were number-coded so there appeared a listing of numbers not necessarily in sequence, as they were listed according to the priority of need. As the student completed each skill, the number was circled. In this way the author could determine which skill was to be covered next.

As each program card was completed, another was made up and stapled to the first one. In this way the student had a cumulative record of the work he had done from
The cards were kept in a wooden file box on the teacher's desk. They were filed by period and row number. One person in each row was responsible for the distribution of these cards at the beginning of each period. This saved a great deal of confusion at the beginning of each period and the students were able to get their materials and get to work immediately upon entering the room. Each individual student was responsible for returning his card to the proper place in the file box. This created no confusion as the students completed their work at different times during the period.

Since there was a chance that the program cards might be lost or misplaced (which occurred in five cases) the author felt it was necessary to devise a form which would reflect the cumulative record of each student. Two Remedial Indicator Charts (see Appendix B) were devised for each class. One chart was for Comprehension and one for Word Attack Skills. The skills were numbered in sequence across the top. The names of each student in the class appeared down the side. There was one box for each skill and a circle was placed in the boxes which corresponded to the number-coded skills which each student needed. At the end of each week, when the author programmed the students, a date would be placed within the circle of the skill which the student had completed that week. The number of the
skill was circled on the student's program card at the same time. Thus, the teacher could see at a glance the cumulative record of each student in both comprehension and word attack skills as well as the cumulative record of the entire class. In the event a program card was lost or misplaced, these charts provided the teacher with a permanent record of the student's progress and completion. Thus, the teacher was able to program each student without fear of repeating any skills or materials.

In order to avoid programming too many individuals into each learning center, a Skills Placement Chart (see Appendix C) was developed. The teacher had to become well-acquainted with the various components of each learning center so that enough materials would be available for the number of students programmed into the center. This chart was divided into four columns. The names of each learning center appeared down the side of the first column and the days of the week (Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday) appeared across the top of the page. As each student was programmed into a learning center, the teacher would make an abbreviated notation as to which component the student had been assigned. The names of each student were included in the listening centers so the teacher would see at a glance who was supposed to be working there, thus avoiding any confusion. These charts were labeled with the period and week's date and kept at the teacher's desk for ready reference. At the end of the week, the chart
was discarded and a new one made up for the following week.

The students were presented with individual folders which were kept in a special carton labeled with the number of their period. The students were required to keep all answer sheets in these folders. Their names, date, learning center, answers to exercises and scores appeared on these answer sheets. Each week, the teacher reviewed the folders to note the scores they received on their exercises as well as the quality of work. This review served as a good indication as to whether they were programmed into the proper level of the material. If there were too many wrong answers, the teacher programmed them into an easier level. If there were no errors, the teacher programmed them into a more difficult level.

In some cases, answer sheets were provided for the learning centers. For those centers which did not have their own answer sheets, the students were required to use their own paper.

To avoid confusion, the folders were distributed by one person in the class and each student was responsible for replacing his own folder at the end of the period or whenever his work was completed.

Orientation

After diagnostic testing was completed and the record-keeping system developed, a period of orientation began. The students were presented with five explanatory
sessions. Each of these sessions dealt with a different phase of the program. At the first session, the meaning of individualization and the need for it was explained. The students' questions were answered completely and sincerely. No guarantees were made as to the individual improvement, but the students were encouraged to work sincerely and thoroughly.

The next session included familiarizing the student with his individual program card. The cards were distributed and the reading scores entered on them were discussed. Included on the program cards was the first week's program. The abbreviations of the learning centers were discussed and their place in the room was shown to the students. In placing the learning centers, the physical set-up and possible traffic patterns within the classroom had to be analyzed to determine the best possible arrangement for each of the learning centers. It was necessary for materials to remain in a fixed position and that the most advantageous traffic pattern be found in order to promote ease of handling and to minimize confusion and disorder.

An integral part of familiarizing the students with the materials was to prepare a large wall chart listing each learning center with an appropriate abbreviation to be used in identifying it. The purpose of using abbreviations was for the student's and teacher's aid in making reference to any of the materials in use.
The students were encouraged to "walk through" their program for the week, locating their assigned centers.

The importance of the program cards was emphasized and the students were instructed as to its use. Volunteers were accepted from each row to bear the responsibility for the distribution of the program cards. Their names were recorded on a chart which went up on the bulletin board so everyone would know to whom to report for his card.

The remaining sessions were devoted to handling and experimenting with the components of the learning centers which were put into operation the first week. Rather than begin the program with all possible learning centers, it was considered important to bring the students into the new system gradually and as progress allowed. During the first week of individualization, only four learning centers were in use by the students. In each succeeding week, a new learning center was introduced with proper care taken to familiarize the students with its use and purpose.

Materials

The materials used in this program consisted of several programmed kits which covered an extremely wide range of skills. They provided sufficient variety in type and approach so the students would not become bored by using the same or very similar material every day.
One of the more important aspects of individualized programmed materials is that as much of it as possible should be self-correcting. This serves two purposes: (1) the student benefits from gaining immediate reinforcement, and (2) it frees the teacher from a great deal of paperwork so that more teacher time can be spent in providing individual help for students with the greatest need.

The materials involved should cover many reading levels so that students with varying ability can work from them.

The following is a listing of materials used in this program:

**Wordpacers**

*Wordpacers*, published by Random House in 1971, is a vocabulary development program that teaches the specific and vital skills necessary for building word power. It offers pupils reading at grade levels four through six, individualized instruction and practice in ten key areas of vocabulary study. The ten areas are:

1. Context clues.
2. Idioms.
3. Antonyms.
4. Synonyms.
5. Homonyms.
6. Roots.
7. Prefixes.
8. Suffixes.
9. Contractions, possessives and plurals.

The program is self-directing and self-correcting, allowing each student to work at his own pace.

Reading Skill Builders

The Reader's Digest Reading Skill Builders, a 1969 publication of Reader's Digest, are colorful Digest-size readers containing short selections based upon articles or stories from the Reader's Digest. Each book includes selections on a variety of topics and each selection has been carefully adapted by reading specialists to a designated reading level. The readability formula used was that of Wheeler-Smith, Spache, Lorge, Thorndike or Dale-Chall. In preparing adaptations, standard word lists were used to guide word choice. Sentences and paragraphs are varied in length. The readability level ranges from grades four through eight.

Following most Skill Builder selections, objective exercises in reading and study skills will be found as well as subjective exercises that encourage interpretation and evaluation. There are also extra challenges that encourage creative endeavor, research activities and recreational reading. Word count for each article is also included to determine reading rate for those students who are having difficulty in reading speed.
**Cyclo-Teacher**

*Cyclo-Teacher*, published by Field Enterprises Educational Corporation in 1972, is an instructional resource based on the principles of programmed learning. It is designed for use by individuals who require enrichment or reinforcement. Its maximum value is realized when its use is planned by the teacher after a careful diagnosis of the learner's specific needs has been established.

The kit consists of five sets of study wheels, known as cycles, two hand-operated mechanical devices upon which the cycles are used, answer sheets, and blank cycles for preparing additional study.

Each cycle has been developed around a short, specific topic. No cycles present a full course in any subject. For example, a series of seven cycles have been developed on the use of the dictionary. Within these cycles, only the basic skills for using the dictionary have been developed.

*Cyclo-Teacher* is based on the techniques of programmed instruction. For example, only a small amount of subject matter is presented to the learner at any one time. Each unit of subject matter is called a frame, and all frames are arranged in a logical sequence. The student is encouraged to respond to each frame in a prescribed manner. Immediately after responding, the student is shown the correct response so he can compare it with his own. This
has the effect of immediate reinforcement for the student. The student is also free to go on through the program at his own pace.

The grouping of the cycles are Language Arts, Study Skills, and Mathematics. Under the title of Language Arts, the following subjects are found: word attack skills; vocabulary; syntax and punctuation; and spelling. Cycles dealing with reference materials and reading and understanding maps may be found under Study Skills. The mathematics group includes mathematics skills ranging from very simple to complex.

Skilpacers

The Skilpacer's Kit, published by Random House School and Library Services, Inc. in 1968, is designed for students with reading levels ranging from approximately grades four through junior high school. It is a program that deals with fifteen reading comprehension skills.

The cards are self-directing and self-correcting and each student can work at his own rate on the reading comprehension skill he needs. For each skill there is a set of highly motivating, effective, self-instructional cards and reinforcement exercises. The skills included in this kit are:

1. Finding the main idea in a whole selection.
2. Finding the main idea in a paragraph.
3. Finding the main idea in a sentence.
4. Recalling factual detail.
5. Following sequence of events.
7. Predicting outcomes.
8. Cause and effect relationships.
9. Reference skills.
10. Summarizing.
11. Skimming and scanning.
12. Grouping and categorizing.
13. Picture interpretation and non-text clues.
15. Understanding character.

The above skills were chosen by the publisher because they are the skills most often demanded of students in reading classes and they are those skills which are generally evaluated on standardized tests.

Specific Skills Series

The Specific Skills Series, published by Barnell Loft, Ltd. in 1972, is a programmed series of workbooks dealing with seven areas of comprehension skills. Each set of workbooks ranges from grade level three through grade level seven.

The kit covers the following skills:

1. Finding the Main Idea.
2. Locating the Answer.
3. Working with Sounds.
4. Drawing Conclusions.
5. Following Directions.
6. Reading for Facts.
7. Using the Context.
The answers to the exercises in the workbooks are included in one answer book. This was found to be most disadvantageous for the purposes of the reading program due to the fact that many students had to refer to the answer book at one time. To correct the situation, the teacher took a printed answer sheet for each level of workbook and placed the answers on it. The answers to all the levels were then enclosed in a folder labeled with the name of the workbook. These seven folders were then placed in a fixed position so they could be easily referred to when a student completed his assignment, thus enhancing the self-correcting aspect of this particular kit.

Audio Reading Progress Laboratory, Level 6

The Audio Reading Progress Laboratory was published by Educational Progress Laboratory in 1970, and is a program using cassettes and coordinated workbooks designed to supplement fundamental word analysis and comprehension skills. It can be used effectively because it covers a wide range of reading abilities. Level six, which was used in the prescriptive program, spans reading levels four through eight. The authors of the program used such measures as the Spache and the Dale-Chall readability formulas to assure the correspondence of the readability of each lesson to the reading achievement of the student.

The lessons in the program follow no rigid sequen-
tial pattern, thus lending themselves to a flexible, individualized and prescriptive program. Each lesson consists of the presentation of a reading skill, several practice exercises, one or more reading passages requiring application of the skill, and an evaluative test.

The reading skills taught in the program fall into five basic skill categories: phonetic analysis, structural word analysis, comprehension, vocabulary and study skills.

The answers to the questions in the individual lessons are given on the cassettes following the exercise, thus providing immediate feedback for the student.

The practice sheets that go with each lesson are not self-correcting, so the teacher requested that the students bring the practice sheets to the desk when they were completed and they were corrected immediately. This provided immediate feedback for both student and teacher, in that both could see how well or poorly the student had done on that particular lesson. In many cases, the teacher was able to point out the fact that the student did not follow directions.

**Grope 'n Group - Language Arts Task Cards**

The **Grope 'n Group Language Arts Task Cards** were published by the Teacher's Exchange of San Francisco in 1972. These are a group of cards with lists of words used in readers from basic text series and standard word lists.
The basic skill area involves sorting and categorizing lists of words. Three categories appear in a color band on the bottom of the card. The student divides his paper into three columns placing one category in each column. He then proceeds to place the words listed on the card under the appropriate column. When the student is completed, he may turn the card over for the answers.

The Grope 'n Group cards are available from reading levels one through six. Reading levels four through six were used in this prescriptive program. They were used as an individual or group activity.

**Scholastic Book Services**

**Publications**

The books listed below are all Scholastic Book Services Publications, published in 1972. These books, dealing with language skills, speed reading, reading skills and word skills, were in workbook form and were split into individual worksheets. The worksheets were then placed in plastic sleeves and the answers to the exercises were recorded in colored marking pen on the reverse side of each sheet. The plastic-encased sheets were then placed in a box with the cover of the workbook pasted on the outside of the box. Each workbook then became a self-correcting kit. Two workbooks were sufficient to provide materials for the entire class. In the interest of expense, this was quite an advantage. It alleviated the necessity of order-
ing classroom sets of each workbook.

The books were published to meet the secondary school teacher's need for high-interest, low-level materials presented in a format acceptable to students reading below grade-level expectancy. The short articles were taken from Scholastic Scope magazine.

The titles used were the following:

1. **Countdown, Scope Study Skills**, by Beryl Goldsweig
2. **Trackdown, Scope Language Skills I**, by Beryl Goldsweig
3. **Wideworld, Scope Reading Skills I**, by Paul C. Berg and Frank Crawford
4. **Dimensions, Scope Reading Skills II**, by Paul C. Berg and Frank Crawford
5. **Spotlight, Scope Reading Skills III**, by Paul C. Berg and Frank Crawford
6. **Sprint, Scope Speed Reading I**, by Beryl Goldsweig

All the materials used in this program were well-received by the students. They are colorful, varied in reading levels, and all present the remediation for skills in an innovative and varied way.

All the students were programmed into learning centers with materials on their independent level of learning. The intent behind this was to provide the student with successful experiences with regard to learning. The
students were told to make a notation on their card if they received a total score on the exercises that represented less than seventy percent. This was easily done since most of the materials had exercises that included ten questions. If the student experienced difficulty, he was programmed into a lower level until he was able to work up to the next level.

When the students indicated preference for certain materials on their program cards, the requests were granted because the scope of the materials proved varied enough to meet the student's individual skill needs. If a student indicated a dislike in working with a particular learning center, he communicated this dislike to the teacher verbally or through a notation on his program card, and he was no longer required to work in that particular center. This aspect of the reading program gave the student some choice as to his learning experience and emphasized the advantage of having varied materials dealing with the same skills.

It should be noted that in addition to the programmed kits and teacher-made materials appearing in the learning centers, the classroom was filled with books of varying subjects and readability levels. Included in these were one hundred and twenty-five Ventura County Library books. The school district in which this study took place, has a contract with the main branch of the Ventura County Library to deliver books to the schools of any teacher in the district wishing to avail himself of this service. The teacher may request definite titles,
readability levels or subject areas. These books stay in the individual teacher's classroom and can be kept there all year, or rotated on a monthly basis, whichever the teacher prefers.

In June 1972, in anticipation of this program, the author made a trip to the main branch of the Ventura County Library and devised a list of titles available to the schools of low-level, high-interest books. These titles were then placed on the request form for September, 1972, and the books have been in use in the classroom ever since.

In addition to the County Library books, there was a revolving paperback rack which was filled with paperback books of varying subject matter and reading level. It was interesting to note that the paperback books were very rarely checked out while they were in a regular bookshelf, but as soon as the paperback rack was moved into the room, and the books were put on prominent display, the paperback books were checked out and read.

There were also magazines placed in different locations around the room. Among these magazines were very popular titles such as Cycle and Mad magazines. The students availed themselves of these when they had completed their work.
The Evaluative Process

An on-going evaluative procedure was found necessary in a prescriptive program of this type so the teacher could effectively program the students. There would be no point in programming the students into remediation for specific skills unless there was some indication as to whether the program was working. As a result, short criterion-referenced tests dealing with individual skills were given to the students at three-week intervals, covering those skills they had worked on during the three-week period. This was determined by the teacher after consulting the Remedial Indicator Chart (see Appendix B). The students were divided into groups on the basis of the similarity of the material covered and the tests were administered. If a few students had not met the criteria, then they were programmed into different materials other than the ones they had already worked in, that covered that particular skill. If the group as a whole showed a lack of knowledge in that skill, then the teacher took one of the group-activity days and devoted the entire period to the skill in which the students as a group were deficient. This was done through games, worksheets, and drill. The students were also programmed into individual materials dealing with the skill, so there was a great deal of reinforcement. The same type of test, with different questions, was then given to the students at the next evaluative period to establish the fact that they had learned
the skill.

This evaluative process not only was advantageous to the teacher in giving important feedback as to where the group was and its progress, but it provided the student with an indication as to how the program was working.

The Teacher

Any program can promise many benefits and hope to accomplish a great deal, but it seems that a program is only going to be successful because the person who is in charge of the program is successful. It is this person who must carry on the day-to-day routine which will ultimately cause the program to succeed or fail. The success of this prescriptive program was partially due to the amount of time the author put into the program, but the major factor was the attitude that the author brought to the program. The reading program demanded an individual who, above all else, liked to teach slow students. The slow student was not what most teachers hoped to deal with in a classroom for several reasons. First, a great deal of work was involved in preparing lessons. Then, too, the work done by slow students in the class did not begin to compare to the very exciting work done by achieving students. Also, slow students could be very rude and unappreciative of the teacher's many hours of work. Above all else, poor learners were usually very difficult behavioral problems. It was not always true that a poor student would give his
teachers a difficult time, but it did seem true that the student who did not like school would not want to sit still for any length of time to learn. Poor learners also seemed to have a high rate of absenteeism which could frustrate a teacher who was not able to tolerate a deviation from the planned lesson or unit.

The image that the author strove to maintain was that of an adult who was very happy to be with his students every day, all year.

The most useful trait that the teacher brought to the classroom was the ability to be flexible when schedule changes became necessary. These schedule changes allowed the students to take advantage of unusually exciting events on campus that had not been planned for. Just because the program was made up for each student that day was not enough reason to skip the more rewarding experience that the special event offered.

This flexibility had to extend itself to everyday classroom problems. Poor learners were not always ready to come in and sit down to work, especially when the work was called "reading." The teacher had to be ready for bad days, whether it be with an individual or a whole class. The attitude of the teacher was that the individual was the most important thing in the room, not the program. If a student chose not to work, and gentle prodding or a humorous remark would not work, the student was left alone.
Usually, he would take out a book and read. If not, as long as he did not prevent others from working, he was not penalized. He was left to "unwind" at his own leisure and would usually come in and work very hard the next day. At times, if the student showed an inclination to talk about his problem, the teacher would listen and offer constructive suggestions or try to make the student see alternative solutions to his problem. The teacher attempted to use the bad days as learning situations.

The teacher played a very low-key role in the program. The object was to remain as unobtrusive as possible, giving the students the feeling that they had the control over their own learning. After the first two weeks of the inception of the program, the teacher found the students would look to one another for help rather than run to the teacher.

Self-concept

In order to improve attitudes toward reading, the program had to relate to the interest of young students going through the later adolescent period of life. This period of adolescence is marked with doubt, with inner searching for answers to identify questions such as "What am I?" "Who am I?" "How worthy am I?" Because the program dealt with poor readers who had already had good reason to feel they were not successful in school due to their generally poor academic performance, the teacher
tried to structure all work around reachable goals. Reading was usually geared to the independent level of the student.

The teacher gave positive feedback whenever possible not only with regard to work but with regard to clothing, appearance, accomplishments that were achieved within the classroom, in the community, and in other classes. Favorable comments made by other teachers with regard to the students were also passed on by the author. This seemed to indicate to the students that the teacher was genuinely interested in the students as individuals, not just as they performed as bodies in the classroom.

Grades

The author was forced to deal with what seemed to be a very difficult assignment: to evaluate poor readers with the traditional A B C D F grading system. The hope of the teacher was that the class could be evaluated on a credit/non-credit basis but it was impractical to put into effect at the time. Because of this, the teacher had to find some way to eliminate the possible pressure and continued label of failure that traditional grades could produce.

The teacher informed the students that good grades would be very easy to earn because performance and effort to improve was all that was required to earn a good grade. Their cooperation was also a major factor in determining grades.
Statistical Analysis and Findings

In this study, an analysis of the difference between pre- and post-test scores was used to determine the effectiveness of the program. The statistical procedures which were used involved the computation of the mean and standard deviation for pre- and post-test scores. Using the mean and standard deviation, the t test (Alder and Roessler, 1968, p. 136-148) was used to compare the significance of the data within the two groups. It should be noted that the anticipated gain for each group was five months (m = .5).

The data for the two classes involved in this study are presented in Table 4. With regard to period one, it can be seen that the total population of the class (N) was 19; the total of the raw data (X) was 18.9; the mean (X̄) was .994; the difference between the raw data and the mean of the data (X - X̄) was .19; and the standard deviation was .592. By using these figures and applying the formula for a t test, the obtained value of t was 3.638, which is significant beyond the .05 level. On the basis of these findings, the null hypothesis was rejected with regard to reading skills.

In viewing Table 4 for the figures of period eight, it can be seen that the total population of the class (N) was 21; the sum of the raw data (X) was 6.4; the mean (X̄) was 3.05; the difference between the raw data and the mean of the data (X - X̄) was 4.80; and the standard deviation
was .473. Taking all these figures into consideration, the obtained value of $t$ was -1.845. The difference was not significant at the .05 level of confidence. On the basis of these findings, the null hypothesis was retained with regard to reading skills.

**TABLE 4**

**COMPARISON OF DIFFERENCES OF PRE-TEST AND POST-TEST SCORES FOR TWO EIGHTH GRADE READING GROUPS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CLASS</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>$X$</th>
<th>$\bar{X}$</th>
<th>$X-\bar{X}$</th>
<th>$(X-\bar{X})^2$</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>$t$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Period One</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>18.90</td>
<td>.994</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>6.3019</td>
<td>.592</td>
<td>3.638</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Period Eight</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>6.40</td>
<td>.305</td>
<td>4.80</td>
<td>4.4800</td>
<td>.473</td>
<td>-1.845</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note - The reliability coefficient of the Nelson Reading Test, Forms A and B, is .90. (See Technical Report, Nelson Reading Test, p. 20).

*p < .05  
$m = .5$

The attitudinal survey was administered to the students in both classes in April 1973. The results of the survey appeared to be positive, although there is no statistical basis for comparison since no pre-test was given. The totals are recorded in Table 5 merely to provide commentary on the three major areas included in the attitudinal survey. These areas were attitudes towards grades,
attitudes toward self, and attitudes toward teachers.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TABLE 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ATTITUdINAL SURVEY OF PERIOD ONE AND PERIOD EIGHT</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTITUDES TOWARD GRADES</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I like the grades I received in reading.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. I think grades are important because they prove how well I have done.</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. My parents like when I get good grades.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. I don't care if I get poor grades.</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. If grades were eliminated, I would be happier.</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. I liked reading because the teacher did not emphasize grades.</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTITUDES TOWARD SELF</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. I feel I am a person of worth at least on an equal plane with others.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. I feel I don't have much to be proud of.</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. I am able to do things as well as most other people.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ATTITUDES TOWARD TEACHER</th>
<th>AGREE</th>
<th>DISAGREE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. The teacher was friendly toward me.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. The teacher made me feel I was welcome in her class.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. The teacher never put me down as a &quot;loser&quot; in class.</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. The teacher liked teaching reading.</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note - *P1 refers to Period One - Total of population was 15. 
P8 refers to Period Eight - Total of population was 20.
Limitations of the Program

A major condition of this study, but primarily a limitation on the result, was the fact that the study was conducted in a public school in a relatively "uncontrolled" (in terms of research design) environment. The students were exposed to many stimuli, outside influences, and factors both in school and out of school which could have had significant bearing on the results of this study.

Another limitation was the fact that the study covered the period from November through April, an equivalent of one semester. This is a short period of time in which to change reading habits and attitudes that have been engrained during nine years of school work.

Also, there was no control group with which to compare the experimental group. Thus, there is no comparison of results between a group which is traditionally taught and that taught by a prescriptive teaching method.

As was mentioned previously, the reading scores were obtained from the Nelson Reading Test, Forms A and B. It should be noted that the test had a unique factor built into it which could be considered a limitation. The grade norms were separated by two-tenths of a school year for each correct answer. Thus, if a student scored 38 correct answers on the vocabulary portion of the test, he was considered to have a vocabulary equivalent of 6.0 years. If that same student took the same Nelson Reading test but a
different form, and scored 34 correct answers, his grade level would be 5.6, almost a half year's difference. General criticism of using only one test as the criterion for reading improvement needs is evident here. If the student for some reason had a particularly bad day when the second test was taken, the result of missing only four words would mean he was a half a year behind his starting point of 6.0.

With regard to evaluation, the criterion-referenced tests should have been given for individual skills as soon as the student completed the skill instead of in groups of four or five at three-week intervals. However, due to the fact that there was no teacher aide in the classroom, it was impossible for the teacher alone to keep up with the distribution of the numerous tests and the correction of same. Several criterion-referenced tests were given in one test three weeks apart. This may have been detrimental to the student because of the lapse of time involved and the fact that the student might have forgotten the work. Also, if the student were absent, he had to wait another three weeks until the next group of criterion-referenced tests were given.

While it was important for the teacher to have a positive attitude toward the students, this also proved to be somewhat of a limitation. It was difficult to assess to what extent the attitude and the personality of the teacher contributed to the success of the program and to
what extent the methodology contributed to the program's success.

The student's attitudes toward themselves, grades and the reading teacher was included to give the reader an idea of the feelings of poor readers in these significant areas. The most traditional sign for this section would have been to present a comparison of the student's attitudes before and after the reading program, but several reasons made this an undesirable course of action. The first reason was that the program, in order to succeed, had to provide a totally different learning environment right from the start that poor readers would find fully attractive. If the author attempted to collect data of this nature at the beginning of the year, he might possibly have raised a barrier to the development of trust between the students and the teacher. The fact was that the author did attempt this type of data-collecting on a small scale at the beginning of the school year 1972-1973. However, only negative effects resulted. This poor reaction led the author to only survey the students at the end of the program.
CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Questions to be Answered

The nature of this study was exploratory to determine if the technique of prescriptive, individualized instruction within a classroom situation would warrant further experimental study. The major questions of the study are as follows:

1. Will the use of prescriptive teaching result in a gain score for each student in the program?
2. Will the use of prescriptive teaching result in improved attitudes of the students toward themselves, school and reading?
3. What should be the teacher's role in this attempt to deal with the prescriptive teaching method and the attitudes of the students?
4. Will the guarantee of a high grade help the students to perform better?

Summary

The relevance of the study was based on the assumption that there exists much disagreement as to how education in general should occur in the public schools, along
with the confusion as to how reading should be taught.

In the late 1960's and early 1970's there was an emergence of more "student-centered" classrooms. Data that could indicate the value of such an approach, particularly when compared to a more traditional one, could be useful for teachers and administrators to study.

The literature reviewed focused on three major areas: education, reading, and research in grouping procedures in reading. The literature related to education indicated the existence of major problems in today's public schools, stating that the school had a negative effect on the learning and emotional-psychological growth of the individual. This literature suggested that the schools be more experimental, more humanistic, more student-centered, more relevant and more flexible.

The literature related to reading indicated great confusion as to how reading should be taught, emphasizing that there did not seem to be any one way to best teach reading even though more research has been done in reading than any other subject. This literature encouraged more experimentation to be done, while cautioning against prematurely accepting any one new approach.

The population of the study involved two eighth-grade classes which were identified as remedial reading classes by means of the Nelson Reading Test.

The method used was a prescriptive, individualized
procedure which required testing, diagnosis, remediation and evaluation of the skill deficiencies of each individual student. This was accomplished through the use of special forms developed by the author as well as varied materials dealing with many skills in word attack and comprehension.

A t test was used in order to measure the significance of the difference between pre- and post-test scores as determined by the Nelson Reading Test, Forms A and B. The obtained value of t for Period One showed that the data were significant and the null hypothesis was rejected, while the obtained value of t for Period Eight proved the data to be insignificant. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Conclusions

The null hypothesis of this study was that the prescriptive approach to individualized instruction within the classroom environment would produce no difference in the following areas: reading skills, reading interest, academic achievement and attitude.

With regard to reading skills, the null hypothesis was rejected in Period One and retained in Period Eight. It is possible that the time of day during which the classes took place had an effect on the results of these two classes. Period One met at the beginning of the day while Period Eight met at the end of the day. These
students were low-achievers to begin with and their ability to learn might have been greatly impaired at the end of the day due to physical and mental fatigue. Therefore, they were not as receptive to learning within the positive atmosphere that was created for them within the program. Another factor that could have had an effect upon their learning situation was the fact that the teacher was also not as effective at the end of the day.

The attitudinal survey indicated that the majority of the students reflected attitudes that were positive rather than negative, but whether they had changed during the course of the program is impossible to determine.

Since the program began during the middle of one semester and ended (for the purposes of this study) during the middle of the second semester, it is impossible to determine whether the academic achievement of the students improved or stayed the same since the grades for the rest of their classes were not available at the time this study was written. As far as their reading grades were concerned, the students seemed pleased with the results. However, on the basis of this alone, it would be impossible to state whether the null hypothesis was accepted or rejected.

The major conclusion of this study suggests that a prescriptive, individualized approach to the teaching of reading will produce some difference in the areas of
reading skills, attitude, and reading interest. Particular attention should be given to the time of day in which the students are programmed, an effective measurement of attitude and the extent of time during which the program takes place.

Recommendations

In view of the findings of this study, the following areas are recommended for future research:

1. Replication of this study with some of the uncontrolled variables controlled, such as a reading group of the same level taught in a traditional teaching method and compared with one taught in a prescriptive, individualized method. Both groups should be taught by the same teacher.

2. Replication with a larger sample.

3. Replication with a far more valid, sensitive and precise measuring instrument of reading skills, and an extended instrument for assessing attitudes.

4. Replication with a correlation of I.Q. and reading scores to see if I.Q. has any effect upon how high a reading score may go.

5. Replication giving a progress report on a credit/no credit system rather than traditional letter grades.

6. Replication with remedial classes being programmed into the early part of the day rather than at the
end of the day.

7. Replication with different age levels.

8. Replication with different socio-economic groups.

9. Replication extending over a period of one year rather than one semester.
REFERENCES


Harris, Albert J. *How to increase reading ability.* New York: David McKay Company, 1970.


Melby, E. O. It's time for schools to abolish the marking system. *Nations Schools,* May, 1966, 77, 104.


Smith, N. B. What have we accomplished in reading?--A review of the past fifty years. Elementary English, 1961, 37, 141-150.


Tremonti, Joseph B. Recognizing the reading difficulties of individual students and techniques leading to their solution. The National Reading Conference, nineteenth Yearbook, II, 1970, 228-236.

# APPENDIX A

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<th>PRE-TEST</th>
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WORD ATTACK SKILLS NEEDED (LISTED BY NUMBER AND IN ORDER OF GREATEST NEED)

COMPREHENSION SKILLS NEEDED (LISTED BY NUMBER AND IN ORDER OF GREATEST NEED)
## APPENDIX B

**REMEDIAL INDICATOR CHART**

**WORD ATTACK SKILLS - PERIOD ONE**

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Note: This chart is open-ended on both sides to allow for additional students, or the addition of more skills.
### APPENDIX C

#### SKILLS PLACEMENT CHART

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