A graduate project submitted in partial satisfaction of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts in Secondary Education by Howard S. Spike

June, 1974
The graduate project of Howard S. Spike is approved:

Committee Chairman

California State University, Northridge
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ABSTRACT

A PERSONALIZED READING CONTRACT METHOD
by
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Master of Arts in Secondary Education
June, 1974

The purpose of this study was to determine whether a reading class in a middle school taught with a personalized reading contract method might improve students' attitudes toward reading as well as improve reading scores. This study describes such a reading program set up by the investigator in a middle school.

An additional question asked by this study is: What effect does rock music played in the classroom have on the student within the reading class. More than one hundred students (in sixth, seventh, and eighth grades) were in reading classes where rock music was played in the background. But the present study restricts itself to a description of forty students who served as subjects in two contrasting conditions (a classroom with music and a classroom setting without). For these forty students, several reading test results were obtained and are analyzed.
I. Statement of the Problem

Introduction

Recent research (Smith, 1963, 1965; Spache, 1964; West, 1964) has shown that a wide range of individual differences in reading ability exists among children in the sixth grade. Better methods of teaching reading are needed if we are to accommodate this wide range in abilities.

The most prevalent practice of accommodating individual differences in reading ability is the use of a basal reader with ability grouping of the class (Barbe, 1961). Many eminent reading authorities who advocate this practice emphasize that at least four groups are needed in the typical reading class. At the same time, they acknowledge that multi-groups are very difficult to administer and are usually successful only with a teacher of superior resourcefulness and ability to organize. (Betts, 1964)

Pupils in the average classroom above the primary grades usually reflect a range of five or more grades in reading ability, with the majority having instructional levels in reading either below or above their current grade placement. This wide disparity in achievement represents a diversity of individual reading difficulties and interests. (Schubert, 1972) An alternative to multi-groups at the middle school level especially merits further study.
Purposes of the Study

The purposes of this study were:

1. To refine the Personal Reading Contract Method within the thirty-minute sixth-grade reading class;

2. To submit to a controlled classroom test the previously unresearched assumption that sixth grade students taught with the Personalized Reading Contract Method (hereinafter referred to as PRCM) in a reading class with rock music played in the background would show greater gains in reading as measured by several reading pre- and post-tests.

3. To evaluate the students' attitudes toward reading before and after being placed in the program.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis of this study is stated as follows:

Students working with the PRCM in a classroom with background music will improve their reading scores at the end of the school year more than students working with the PRCM in a classroom without music as measured by several reading tests. Further, students will develop a positive attitude toward reading as measured by a student survey.

Basic Rationale for Using the PRCM

The PRCM should result in improved quality of instruction for the following reasons:
1. There is evidence that reading score gains improve when pupils are permitted to progress at their own rate. (Barbe, 1961)

2. The student, when working on his class schedule, may enroll in the program only if he wants to. This makes the program totally voluntary. This approach creates a more positive attitude in the student.

3. Positive attitudes are further enhanced through pupil involvement, initiative, and self-direction.

4. The teacher is free to give special remedial help to individual students.

5. The PHCM is easy to administer and can be used by any teacher who would be willing to attend a brief in-service orientation.

Definitions

1. Candy Pass - A candy pass is given to the student as a reward for various reasons: a finished contract, reading and completing a book, or bringing in a poster or a paperback book as a donation to the reading laboratory. The pass may be turned in to the teacher for a candy bar.

2. English Workshop - A one-year course offered to those students leaving the Reading-English Laboratory class. This class emphasizes writing skills as well as reading skills.

3. Lindero Canyon Reading Laboratory - All reading
classes are taught in this classroom. It is a double room and is equipped with numerous reading machines, kits, workbooks, and other audio-visual items. The room is decorated by students enrolled in the class. Posters and informal furniture are used throughout the room.

4. Lindero Canyon Middle School - A school in the Las Virgenes Unified School District in Agoura, California. The school consists of grades six through eight.

5. Reading-English Laboratory - A one-year course offered to those seventh and eighth graders that have remedial reading problems as diagnosed by the school's reading specialist. This fifty-minute class takes the place of the student's regular English class.

6. Reading Laboratory - A one-year course offered to sixth grade students reading at least two years below grade level as determined by the Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills given in the fifth grade. Students are also selected by the elementary schools' reading specialists. This thirty-minute course takes the place of sixth grade foreign language.

Summary

The program which was the basis of this study was conducted by the investigator at Lindero Canyon Middle School of the Las Virgenes Unified School District in Agoura, California.
The study describes the organization and administration of the PRCM and the effects of the program upon forty-sixty grade students in two conditions. The effect of rock music on twenty of these students in one condition is of special interest. The study was undertaken in the belief that the program was achieving its goals and that other educators might find the description of its organization and administration, and the results of the study, useful. It was hoped that similar programs might be set up at other schools.

Limitations of the Study

There were the following limitations of the study:

1. Only sixth grade students from one middle school in one school district were included in this study.

2. Data concerning parent occupations, reading interests, hobbies, like and dislike of school, home conditions, place in family were obtained from a questionnaire and are subject to whatever errors in validity and reliability and befalls such group data.

3. Family relationships, peer relationships, and personal problems, which might influence performance, were not controlled.

4. There was no way to correlate the reading scores with the students' reading potential, since the school district would not permit I.Q. testing on these sixth graders.
as this was against existing policy.

5. The two classes used for this study were instructed at different times during the day. This is felt to be a limitation as there has been research showing differences in learning between students taught in the morning and those same students taught in the afternoon.

6. The test conditions could not be controlled as the tests were administered in a regular public classroom setting where such factors as outside noise, interruptions, and other potential distractions could not be controlled.

7. The size of the sample used in the study was limited as the investigator had access to only forth sixth grade reading students during the period of time in which the study was being conducted.
II. Review of Professional Literature

The purpose of this chapter is to review briefly the literature dealing with a description of individualized reading and those programs that are related to this area.

"Individualized reading instruction" or "personalized reading instruction" are terms used in professional literature with reference to instructional methods that depart from the single basal text provided for all students at a given grade level.

Miriam Wilt points out some of the distinguishing characteristics of the individualized reading program:

Learning to read is individualized only to the extent that each child makes his own selection of reading material, with teacher guidance when necessary; he starts where he is, progresses at his own rate, has instruction according to his developmental and remedial needs, and is involved with the teacher in the evaluation of his own progress. (Wilt, 1958, p. 27)

Walter Barbe has listed four major distinguishing characteristics of the personalized or individualized reading program.

1. Each student selects his own material from which he wishes to read and be taught skills.
2. Progress is at the child's own rate.
3. Skill instruction is provided at the level at which the child is reading rather than in materials carefully graded, which may be below his interest level.
4. Groups are established for a wide variety of pur-
poses only one of these being skills instruction. (Barbe, 1961)

According to Jeannette Veatch's conception of individualized instruction,

This new reading program...is based upon the idea that children can and do read better, more widely, and with vastly increased interest, when allowed to choose their own reading materials....The self-selection principle discards the well-known idea of planned, sequential development of level of difficulty programs of basal readers. (Veatch, 1966, p. 10)

Nila Banton Smith, in a discussion of old and new concepts of individualized instruction, emphasizes the fact that although individualized instruction is not new, the present plan is child-psychology oriented, utilizing particularly Dr. Willard Olson's theory of seeking, self-selection and pacing. Thus the child seeks out and chooses the book he desires to read, and paces himself. (Smith, 1961)

According to Jacobs, individualized reading instruction is the process of providing the following learning opportunities:

1. The teacher provides ample time for individual reading and for various kinds of group reading.

2. He arranges for individual skills reading and for independent recreational reading.

3. He provides time for children to share their reading accomplishments. (Jacobs, 1955)

Individualized reading instruction offers another
approach to teachers and administrators who feel we must have children read more, think more, and become citizens equipped to meet the demands of a rapidly changing world. All reading programs should take into consideration the individual student, his unique patterns of physical, mental, social and emotional growth as well as his attitudes and interests.

The following chart, prepared by Veatch, distinguishes between the personalized or individualized and the traditional basal approach to reading instruction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Individualized Reading</th>
<th>Ability-Group Reading</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Children choose what they read.</td>
<td>Teachers choose what children read.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wide variety and great numbers of books needed.</td>
<td>Reading occurs at ability level of group, hence not so exact.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Slow readers' choices of books unnoticed because of variety of books chosen.</td>
<td>Slow learners stigmatized publicly by assignment of easy books.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No child need hold up whole group.</td>
<td>Whole group must wait for one child.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading occurs at child's own rate.</td>
<td>Reading occurs at rate of child reading orally.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enthusiasm marked and frequent.</td>
<td>Enthusiasm tepid and infrequent.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience situation for oral reading genuine.</td>
<td>Audience situation for oral reading artificial.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Skills taught on an individual basis.</td>
<td>Skills taught on a group basis.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individualized Reading</td>
<td>Ability-Group Reading</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>------------------------</td>
<td>-----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Spontaneous need to &quot;plug&quot; for favorite books is felt.</td>
<td>As material is chosen for child, he has no need to convince anyone else of its value or worth to him.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading has purpose recognized and originated by child as intrinsically valuable.</td>
<td>Reading is apt to take on teachers' purposes and give rise to reading for marks, grades, stars, or other extrinsic rewards.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child reads what he likes.</td>
<td>Child may read material which he may or may not like, admire, and need.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Veatch, 1966, p. 25)

It was pointed out by Barbe that methods by which the teacher approaches the teaching of reading must encourage interest and enthusiasm. Teaching methods must not become static, routine. Individual differences among children, teachers, classroom, schools, communities, call for different procedures. (Barbe, 1961)

In an evaluation of the available research on individualized reading instruction, Paul Witty states:

It may be readily concluded that available experimental data do not justify the recommendation of sole dependence on individualized reading. The experiments appear generally to be inconclusive and to lack sufficient provision for variable factors which may influence results. (Witty, 1959, p. 406)

Dolch points out that since the basis of all individualized reading is the conviction that children may be passive learners when a book is chosen for them and active learners when they choose their own, research is needed in areas where homes are hostile to schools and to reading.
Educators need to know if individualized reading is effective for both fast and slow learners and if there are any "side effects." (Dolch, 1962)

Yvonne M. Lofthouse reviewed several significant investigations and concluded that "...sufficient research data are definitely not yet available to warrant the changing of school systems from the traditional to the individualized reading approach." (Lofthouse, 1962)

Patrick Groff reviewed thirty-eight individualized reading reports and the results were inconclusive. Some research revealed a possible latent effect on increased reading ability for pupils having been taught by the individualized method. (Groff, 1963)

As Schubert and Torgerson point out, "...round robin reading with a heterogeneous group is as pedagogically outdated as the dodo." (Schubert and Torgerson, 1968)

Dorothy Raymond has the opinion that an individualized reading program does not mean thirty groups instead of three. Nor does it mean that each child "performs" identical learning exercises at different speeds. It does not mean that children always work alone, either. Actually, there is more group interaction in an individualized program than in the traditional classroom. Further, it does not mean that pupils do only what they want to do. What it does mean is a different way of teaching. Above all, an individualized program enables children to feel success-
ful and retain their self-respect. (Raymond, 1973)

A review of the available research of individualized reading instruction revealed that this method of instruction appears to result in increased reading ability and increased reading interest. The research, however, is not conclusive because there is: (1) a lack of functional definition of individualized instruction, (2) a lack of research at all grade levels and ability levels, and (3) a lack of general agreement among the various research findings.

While none of the research reviewed specifically dealt with the use of music in a classroom setting, several studies of the effects of music on the ability to read and study are noteworthy.

Hall compared the effects of background music on the reading comprehension of eighth and ninth grade students taking a standardized reading test. Results showed that fifty-eight percent of the group increased their test scores with music in the background. Hall consequently concluded: "Within certain limitations, substantial aid to reading comprehension results from the use of background music at the eighth and ninth grade levels." (Hall, 1952)

On the other hand, Frederick found that in the case of college freshmen, "A consistent difference favoring the efficiency of study for the non-distracted (no background
music) group was isolated with probable statistical significance when the total group comparison was effected."
(Frederick, 1937)

In a study done by Henderson, Crews, and Barlow, it was determined that the effect of background music on reading efficiency depends on the type of music played and the complexity of the reading material. While popular music distracted students significantly on the paragraph section of a standardized reading test, classical music did not. Neither classical nor popular music affected performance on the vocabulary section. In addition, it was found that students who were not accustomed to studying with music were influenced in the same way as students who were accustomed to the music. (Henderson, 1945)

In reviewing the literature for his book, The Social Psychology of Music, Farnsworth notes that readers can sometimes benefit from background music, particularly if they are young and used to it. He notes a study by Freeburne and Fleisher whose data revealed an actual gain in the reading speed of college students who listened to jazz as they studied. (Farnsworth, 1958)

Summary

The general conclusion to be drawn from these research findings is that there is not sufficient evidence of either the superiority or inferiority of the individualized
reading program as compared with the basal reading program. Much more controlled research at all grade levels and in all types of schools is needed.

The findings on background music are conflicting; therefore, no general conclusion may be made.
III. Methodology and Findings

Location of the Study

Lindero Canyon Middle School, where this research study was conducted, is one of the two middle schools in the Las Virgenes Unified School District. This school district is located in Los Angeles County and extends west from the edge of Woodland Hills in the San Fernando Valley to the Ventura County line. It includes such communities as Hidden Hills, Calabasas, Agoura, Malibu Lake, and parts of Malibu Canyon and Westlake Village. It is a rapidly-growing suburban area. The steady construction of new houses and new housing tracts in all areas accounts for the equally steady growth of the school district. Since this is a district that has a tremendous growth factor (1500 new students per year), it is essential that the reading program be administered so that a student may be placed into it any time during the school year, or be taken out of the program at any time during the school year.

Description of the Program

The reading program administered at Lindero Canyon Middle School is structured around the Personalized Reading Contract Method devised by the investigator. The program works in conjunction with the elementary schools' reading program, as well as with the high school reading program.
In this way there is continuity in each student's reading education.

Students in the program are tested at the beginning of the school year. New students entering the program during the school year are tested at that time. All students are tested again in June or whenever the instructor feels it is appropriate. These test results are then shared with the student, who then becomes aware of his strengths and weaknesses.

Each September, a week prior to the opening of school, students who are going to be in the reading lab are contacted and asked if they would like to decorate the room before school begins. The response is always excellent and the problem then becomes the number of students who ask to help.

When an individual enters the room, in many cases he becomes aware of the bright colors and cheerful atmosphere. The room in some ways is similar to a comfortable den or family room. There is a sofa in one corner surrounded by three traditional paperback bookracks. The bookracks are like those found in a drugstore or bookstore. Instead of traditional desks, tables and study carrels are utilized and posters brought in by teachers and students cover the walls. The posters not only decorate, but motivate, as each has some written material on it.

However, in spite of the superficial informality of
the room, there is a good deal of structure and organization. This structure and organization is apparent to most adults who have visited the lab and to those students who have been in the program for any length of time. This structure begins the day the student has been identified as needing help in reading. Along with one of his instructors, he sits down and plans a program which is his Personalized Reading Contract. This contract directs the student to those activities which he will pursue in the next couple of days or weeks, depending upon the length of his own individual contract. Items to be used are listed and may vary from tapes, records and reading machines to the traditional textbooks and workbooks. Some compromising may go on in the selection of items for the contract. For example, if there is a particular item that the teacher feels the student needs and ought to work with, but the student is reluctant to do so because he prefers to do something else, some bargaining may take place.

Once the student and the instructor have jointly decided upon the contract, the student begins working to complete the contract at his own pace. In this way, it is recognized that some students work more quickly or more slowly than others. He competes only with himself. His daily work is kept track of by means of a diary kept in the form of a chart on the back of the contract. The student writes what was accomplished each day as well as
his own individual comments about the work he has done. Additionally, each student has a file folder where all of his work is kept during the period of each contract.

At the conclusion of the contract period the student turns in his contract together with his work to the teacher for final correction and evaluation. All work that the student does has been first corrected by the student himself. The teacher's edition of every item is available in the classroom and the student is told that while cheating is possible under this honor system, he would be only cheating himself. Surprisingly, incidents of cheating are minimal and usually corrected by a talk with the student.

The Personalized Reading Contract Method

This method of learning has been named the Personalized Reading Contract Method by the investigator. This is based on the following:

1. The student has, by himself, agreed to participate in a program that will help him with his reading difficulty. He may choose to be in a regular English class as an alternative.

2. The student has acknowledged, by himself, that he indeed does have a reading difficulty.

3. The student has had a great deal of involvement in making the decision as to what his own individual contract will consist of.
4. The student has his own room that he himself has helped decorate and organize.

5. The student, to a large degree, decides where he will sit and next to whom.

6. Once the contract has been agreed upon and signed, the student decides what it is that he is going to do specifically each day. In other words, will he do the SRA card today, or does he feel like just taking a free reading day. The student decides by himself the procedures that he will follow within the structure. The order in which he completes the assignment on his contract is not important. The important point is that he attempts each assignment and tries to complete the contract by the agreed deadline.

7. Each student corrects his own work. He is then able to see his own errors immediately and can see his progress first-hand.

8. Each student, when he decides he has completed his contract to the best of his ability, signs up for a contract evaluation and a new contract.

9. The student, together with the teacher, evaluates his success or failure, and maps out his next contract. The whole procedure starts again.

Many different activities (group) go on in the class in addition to contract work. Individualization was not intended to mean individual solitude and isolation. It was rather intended to mean instruction individually-tailored to meet the needs of the individual student.
Group discussion centers upon group lessons.

Many of the observers who have visited the program have stated that they are amazed at the relaxed atmosphere of the room, and the relaxed-happy attitudes of the students. Some visitors have asked how this is accomplished and the investigator feels it is due to:

1. The student involvement in every step of the program.

2. The joint commitment on the parts of student, teacher, school administration, school board, and community to work together to solve the needs of each and every individual student.

3. The room environment, which is geared to the students' tastes and interests.

As a means of motivation, having classes in the reading laboratory is considered a privilege. The student may check out at any time. If a student is not doing the assigned work or if he is preventing other students from doing their work, the teacher may have him transferred. Some of the privileges associated with the reading laboratory but with none of the other classes in the school are:

1. Receiving candy as a reward.

2. Tutoring primary grade students in the elementary school, located next door to the middle school.

3. Being allowed to chew gum during class time.

4. Sitting or lying on the floor.
5. Listening to popular music which may be played in the background during class time.

6. Being graded on a pass/fail system, with letters sent to parents each grading period.

Obtaining a Sample

For the purpose of this study, sixty-five sixth graders were given an information sheet to fill out at the beginning of the school year. (See Appendix A.) These students were all to be programmed into the reading program. However, the investigator planned to divide forty of these students into two particular groups.

After examining the completed information sheets and meeting with each of the forty students individually, two groups of twenty students each were organized. In each group half of the students had indicated a desire to have background music played in the classroom while half had indicated a preference to be in a class where no music would be played. The two groups were referred to as Reading Lab M (with Music) and Reading Lab NM (without Music). Group M was made up of a mixture of students. Half of these students wanted to listen to music while the other half showed no desire to have music played. This group was designated as the one that would have music played. Group NM also consisted of students whose preferences were divided and was designated as the group that
would not have music played during class time.

Test Instruments Used

The following tests were administered by the investigator during the second week of the school year to the forty sixth graders. They are listed in the order they were given.

1. Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, Form D1. This twenty-five minute comprehension test was written for grades four through six.

2. Nelson Reading Test, Form A. This twenty-minute comprehension test may be given to grades three through nine.

3. Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test, Form W. This thirty minute comprehension test may be given to grades four and fifth month through grades eight and fifth month.

4. Slosson Oral Reading Test is an individually administered word recognition test.

These same tests were given at the end of the school year with a different form used for the comprehension tests.

The tests were selected by the school district without any explanation as to why these four tests were chosen.

Changes in students' attitudes toward reading and participation in a reading class were ascertained by the use of an informal student survey consisting of true and
false statements about reading and the reading program. Each student selected for the study sample was asked to complete a student survey when he entered the program. (See Appendix B.) The students were asked to complete a second survey when they completed the program at the end of the school year. (See Appendix C.)

Results

For purpose of statistical analysis, the test results were subjected to a non-parametric test, the median test. (Siegel, 1958)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>NM</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Above Group</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Group</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Value of Chi square = 1.0 (N.S.)

Student reading scores achieved on the Gates-MacGinitie do not differ significantly as indicated by this statistical analysis. Therefore, the effect of music did not play a significant role.
Table 2 - Nelson Reading Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>NM</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Above Group</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Group</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Value of Chi Square = 12.0 (Significant at the .05 level)

Student reading scores achieved on the Nelson Reading Test differ significantly as indicated by this statistical analysis. The direction favors the group that had the music.

Table 3 - Stanford Reading Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>NM</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Above Group</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Group</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Value of Chi Square = 4.0 (N.S.)

Student reading scores achieved on the Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test do not differ significantly as indicated by this statistical analysis. The difference is in the unexpected direction. It is to be noted that the difference is accounted for by one student's performance.
Table 4 - Slosson Oral Reading Test

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>NM</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Above Group</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Below Group</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Median</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Value of Chi Square = 20.0 (Significant)

Student reading scores achieved on the Slosson test differ significantly as indicated by this statistical analysis. The direction favors the group that had the music.

Summary of Test Results

Two of the four tests administered show that there was a difference between the two groups. The group that had music clearly shows up as the group that made significant gains. It is difficult to point out why there was no significant difference in the Gates-MacGinitie test results. The explanation could possibly be that this was the first of the four tests given and some nervousness may have been felt while taking this test.
Conclusions

On the basis of the results presented in the previous chapters, the following conclusions have been made:

1. Teaching reading to sixth grade students by the Personalized Reading Contract Method produces significantly improved reading scores.

2. Music played no significant role in improving test scores. Students who asked not to have the music seemed to accept it, and those students who liked music seemed to be relaxed.

3. The students demonstrated a positive attitude toward reading after one year in the program.

Careful consideration must be given to the characteristics of the learner and to the role of the classroom teacher. In order for any instructional program to succeed, the learner must be emotionally, physically, and educationally prepared to learn. Diagnostic tests must be used to reveal weaknesses as well as strengths. The Personalized Reading Contract Method requires the teacher to assume the role of remediatior, observer, and advisor. The teacher's new role involves constant evaluation and revision of each student's learning opportunities.

This study has been exploratory in nature and limited in scope. The results provide evidence that the Personal-
alized Reading Contract Method does provide significant increases in reading comprehension test scores as well as in word recognition test results. An increase in positive attitudes toward reading and reading instruction was also noted. It was erroneously assumed that background music was the key factor in the program. It should be noted that the investigator feels that the music did play a role in motivating the student as well as serving as a tool to control the noise within the class. It also was used as a means of rewarding students.

Recommendations

Since the Personalized Reading Contract Method does produce an increase in reading skills and an improvement in attitude, teacher education courses should place more emphasis upon this method.

Further study is recommended to determine the extent to which a Personalized Reading Contract Method extended over a longer period of time would affect the students' attitudes toward reading, school, other content areas, and basic reading skills.

Teachers should be aware of the differences among the students in their particular school and study the characteristics of those students. Books and teaching materials which are provided for students should not be about the same general topic or interest for every school or every
student within the school or school district.

In summary, the Personalized Reading Contract Method is worthy of further study and evaluation by students and teachers. It is recommended that the PRCM be implemented in as many diverse school communities as possible and with all ability groups of students.
Appendix A

Information Sheet for Sixth Graders

1. I like to read books about:

2. My favorite sports are:

3. During leisure time I like to:

4. I like school because:

5. I dislike school because:

6. My father works at:

7. My mother works at:

8. I have ___ brothers, aged ________________________

9. I have ___ sisters, aged ________________________

10. My favorite subjects are:

11. My worst subjects are:

12. At home I (do) (do not) study in a quiet room.

13. I would (like) (not like) to be in a reading class
   with popular music played in the background.

14. I would find the music (disturbing) (not disturbing).
Appendix B

Student Survey I

Mark True or False next to the number.

1. I like to free read.

2. I have had the contract method before.

3. I have had a class in a classroom with a "mod" appearance before.

4. My favorite class will be Reading Lab this year.

5. One of my favorite classes will be Reading Lab this year.

6. My worst class will be Reading Lab this year.

7. One of my worst classes will be Reading Lab this year.

8. I would like to transfer out of Reading Lab, if possible.
Appendix C
Student Survey II

Mark True or False next to the number.

1. I liked reading a number of books.
2. I liked choosing my own books.
3. I did not like the workbooks.
4. I did not like the kits.
5. I liked knowing what reading skills I needed to improve
6. I do not like working on my own the majority of the time.
7. I do not like to free read.
8. I like to read but I do not like the follow-up work.
9. I think I read better now than I did at the beginning of the year.
10. The Personalized Reading Contract Method is a good method for solving my reading problems.
11. I would not take this class next year if I have the choice.
12. I liked working individually with Mr. Spike.

Write five comments about the Reading Lab class:
1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
References


Groff, P. J. "Comparisons of Individualized Reading and Ability Grouping Approaches as to Reading Achievement." Elementary English, 40 (March, 1963), 258-65.


Lofthouse, Y. M. "Individualized Reading: Significant Research." Reading Teacher, 16 (September, 1962), 35-37.


