A STUDY OF METHODS OF TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION IN GRADES FIVE, SIX, AND SEVEN

A Thesis

Presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate School

Appalachian State Teachers College

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

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by

Patsy Ruth Stubbs

August 1956

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The problem was to find what methods had been found useful in teaching reading comprehension in grades five, six, and seven. Included in the study were the factors of deciding what skills should be taught, alloting a suitable amount of time for teaching comprehension, providing for individual differences, and selecting interesting materials.

Fifty-four teachers in Charlotte and Boone, North Carolina, were interviewed. The latter group included fifth, sixth, and seventh grade teachers from six states, enrolled in the Summer School Session at Appalachian State Teachers College. Each person was asked first whether he did direct teaching of reading comprehension. If this practice were followed the teachers were then asked to state whether they taught each of eleven different phases of comprehension, and to add any other types they considered worthwhile. In each case they were asked to mention methods they had found useful. The teachers revealed the chief problems they had observed in the children's poor oral and silent-reading comprehension, and told of methods they had used in deciding how well the children understood what they read. Information was secured as to the reading materials they recommended, approximate time limits they suggested, and how they provided

for individual differences.

The study showed that all except one of the fifty-four teachers did direct teaching of reading comprehension. The more common types of comprehension taught included reading: to solve problems, to follow directions, to gather and organize materials, to get the main thought, to interpret, to remember details, to predict outcomes, to test the truthfulness of a passage, and to make inferences. Since these skills were considered important by most of the teachers interviewed, the writer concluded that these types of comprehension should be a part of the curriculum in grades five, six, and seven. A number of desirable ways of teaching these skills were also suggested.

Since the teachers were almost exactly divided in opinion between teaching comprehension to the class as a whole and teaching it to ability groups, it was concluded that either method could be used, and that the teacher should choose the method best suited to the class, to himself, and to the purpose of the teaching. One hour was considered adequate by most teachers for teaching reading comprehension during the school day, and about half of the formal reading period was used in this way. Since limited meaning vocabulary seemed to be the biggest problem, it was recommended that this be given a part of most instruction periods.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

For many years the teaching of reading has been observed and criticized by parents and journalists alike. The program of reading in the schools has been the subject of numerous explosive newspaper and magazine articles. A few recent books have attacked "modern" methods of teaching the various phases of reading. Some outspoken writers have doubted that teachers are making an effort to do direct teaching of reading.

I. THE PROBLEM

Statement of the problem. The purpose of this study was to learn what methods fifth, sixth, and seventh grade teachers have found helpful in teaching each of the various phases of comprehension separately and concurrently in a normal classroom situation. Included in this study were the factors of providing for individual differences, grouping the classes, determining how much time should be spent in teaching reading comprehension, deciding the quality of a child's comprehension, listing weaknesses observed in the classes, and citing material that had been found useful in teaching reading comprehension.

Importance of the study. Reading is considered by many people to be the most important study in the curriculum. Ability in reading certainly is basic to and desirable in many other kinds of learning, such as doing verbal problems in arithmetic, research in social studies and language arts, and directions-reading in art and science.

Today there are students in the public schools who are mere word-callers, not readers, and others who comprehend very little of what they read. As oral word-calling is sometimes mistaken for reading and understanding, the boys and girls who are victims of this improper training should be discovered and given immediate, constructive help in using reading skills to the full advantage. Those who understand and retain only a small portion of what they read, and are unable to discern the deeper implications of the passages, should be trained to think as they read.

Many teachers are concerned with improving their instruction. Teaching children to better comprehend what is read from day to day is one means of improving the effectiveness of classroom teaching.

II. DEFINITION OF THE KEY TERM

Definition of comprehension. Word-calling and poor retention of material read are commonly classed as "lack

of comprehension." Webster defines comprehension as "the capacity of the mind for understanding fully, or by means of the relations which connect particular facts to knowledge in general."[1] Comprehension, then, involves a training or readiness program, so that the person is capable of performing this necessary thought process operation.

Limitations of the study. This study was limited to interviews with fifty-four teachers of Charlotte and in Boone, North Carolina. The teachers contacted in Boone were from six different states.

The fact that only fifth, sixth, and seventh grade teachers were interviewed limited the scope of the study.

Procedure and technique used in the study. The plan of work on the thesis was to find out, through the use of check-lists in interviews, what methods teachers of fifth, sixth, and seventh grades had found most useful in teaching reading comprehension. Those persons interviewed were asked first if they did direct teaching of reading comprehension. If their answers were affirmative, the teachers were then asked if they taught each of eleven phases of comprehension, and were asked to mention any other types of comprehension skills taught, giving the most helpful

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[1] William Allan Neilson and others (ed.), Webster's New International Dictionary, Second Edition (Springfield, Mass.: G. & C. Merriman Company, Publishers, 1950), p. 550.

methods they had discovered for training the children in each skill.

The teachers interviewed were also asked what methods they used to determine the overall quality of a child's reading comprehension; the chief situation in which they taught comprehension; the three factors they considered to be most prevalent in poor silent-reading comprehension, and in poor oral-reading comprehension; the books and other materials they had found helpful for this purpose; how much time they spent in teaching comprehension during the school day; what part of the reading period was used in teaching these skills; and how they provided for individual differences in the teaching of reading comprehension. A copy of the check-list may be found in Appendix A.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Many authors have stated their views on the idea of reading comprehension, the factors involved in poor comprehension, and a few methods of teaching comprehension. A brief summary of these phases of comprehension will be given in this chapter.

Elaboration of the phases of comprehension. Comprehension is composed of many attitudes, skills, and abilities. Improvement in comprehension, then, rests on improvement of one or more components of comprehension. The various types of comprehension needed by the student include: reading to get the main thought, reading to remember minute details, reading to follow directions, reading to make inferences, reading to sense the emotional overtones, reading to detect irony, reading for problem-solving, reading to interpret, and reading to test the truthfulness of the passage.[1]

Reading to get the main thought involves skimming, a rapid type of reading in which the reader hurriedly

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[1]Bureau of Reference, Research and Statistics, The Place of Reading in the Elementary School Program, Prepared by the Division of Instructional Research (New York: City Board of Education, 1944), p. 30.

determines what the selection is about. It gives an overall picture of the author's idea, without noting the specific details.

Reading to remember details is especially useful when the reading matter is of a thorough, factual type. This careful reading is undertaken because of the importance of what has been said, and because the reader has reason to retain most of the ideas contained there.

Reading to follow directions is important in many everyday activities, such as in cooking and in making model airplanes. In school such reading might result in carrying on science experiments or working word-problems in arithmetic.

Reading to make inferences is useful when the solution to a problem or the description of a situation is not given directly by the author, but enough facts are given for a properly trained reader to discern the implications.

Reading to sense the emotional overtones is an attempt to discover the underlying feeling of the author toward his subject. This would involve, for example, recognizing a southerner's version of the Civil War, or a wife's version of her noted husband's life.

Reading to detect irony is a protective device whereby the reader realizes the fact that the author's real meaning is the exact opposite of what a surface examination seems to

reveal. This involves both careful reading, and a knowledge of the characteristics of such writing.

Reading for problem-solving involves defining the problem, locating suitable material to answer the questions, and selecting items pertinent to the situation. This type of reading is useful in solving both urgent problems of everyday life, and hypothetical problems set up in the classroom as a part of a particular study.

Reading to interpret is a device used to read meanings into the selection. It involves going beneath the surface and discerning, perhaps word by word, the author's hidden meaning.

Reading to test the truthfulness of a passage is especially important in reading newspapers and historical books, because many so-called truths have been arrived at by writers who have purposely ignored negative data.

Recognition of weaknesses in comprehension. That there are weaknesses in various phases of comprehension is noticeable in every classroom. By testing, teachers have found among their pupils serious weaknesses in getting the overall significance of a passage, predicting outcomes, organizing materials, following directions carefully, and in gathering details. Ability in critical reading, generalizing, skimming, and forming sensory impressions is not so easily measurable by the present comprehension

tests. When deficiences along these lines are not observed by the pupil's present teacher, however, they are allowed to grow into larger difficulties for a future teacher to uncover and remove.[2]

Determining poor comprehension. What methods, then have been used in determining a lack of comprehension? Oral reading is used by some teachers. Many people think that if a child reads with expression and calls every word correctly, he has comprehended what he has read. As this is frequently not the case, this method is ineffective.[3]

Workbooks have also been used to detect comprehension weaknesses.[4] Many of these are not adequate because of poor construction. Others are well-constructed and objective, but do not produce the desired results because the children consider them a distasteful chore, and the teachers, a means of lessening the work in a duty-filled day.

Teacher-prepared tests are sometimes used to test the power of comprehension. While some of these are quite well done, others are too subjective, and are not administered

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[2]Guy L. Bond and Eva Bond, Teaching the Child to Read (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1943), p. 323.

[3]Charles E. Germane and Edith Gayton Germane, Silent Reading (New York: Row, Peterson, and Company, 1922), p. 22.

[4]Bond, op. cit., p. 127.

often enough to convey a true picture of the pupil's comprehension abilities. Germane says that comprehension tests should be isolated from memory tests, in that the former should be thought-provoking questions in non-bookish terms.[5]

Standardized tests are considered the best means of detecting weaknesses, as they have scales for rating, have more objective means of comparison, give an exact diagnosis of the troubles, and show the specific abilities of the pupil.[6] Some of the more common standardized tests are: the Burgess Scale for Measuring Ability in Silent Reading, the Courtis Silent Reading Test, the Gates Silent Reading Tests, Haggerty Reading Examination, and the Stone Series of Narrative Reading Tests.[7] As the attention span is very short in the elementary grades, long tests might be inaccurate.[8] No method of measuring comprehension has been completely satisfactory.[9]

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[5]Germane and Germane, op. cit., p. 168.

[6]E. Ehrlich Smith, The Heart of the Curriculum (New York: Doubleday, Page and Company, 1925), p. 147.

[7]Paul McKee, Reading and Literature in the Elementary School (Atlanta: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1934), pp. 322-323.

[8]Luella Cole, The Improvement of Reading (New York: Farrar and Rinehardt, Inc., 1938), p. 202.

[9]Ibid., p. 201.

Factors involved in poor comprehension. Despite the fact that no suitable measure of comprehension has been developed, reading researchers have found several factors which they consider to be involved in poor comprehension. Some of these are: inability to gather and reproduce the material read, inability to locate and articulate the answers to questions, inability to discover and properly organize the main ideas, and inability to retain what is read.[10]

Poor comprehension in silent reading might be due specifically to poor vision, lack of interest, carelessness, narrow experience range, limited meaning vocabulary, too much stress on speed, mental incapability, congenital word blindness, poor eye movement habits, lack of proper training,[11] lack of thought-unit reading, inappropriate rate of reading for that type material, not enough practice in reading for various purposes,[12] or, even, too difficult reading material.[13]

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[10]Fowler D. Brooks, The Applied Psychology of Reading (New York: D. Appleton and Company, 1926), p. 177.

[11]Ibid., p. 178.

[12]Albert J. Harris, How to Increase Reading Ability (New York: Longmans, Green and Company, 1940), p. 268.

[13]Emmett Albert Betts, The Prevention and Correction of Reading Difficulties (New York: Row, Peterson and Company, 1936), p. 261.

The lack of oral-reading comprehension might be due to poor vision, lack of interest, poor meaning vocabulary, mental inability, and congenital word blindness. Other probable causes not evidenced in silent reading include: stress on pronunciation and expression, rather than on meaning; faulty breathing habits; and limited eye-voice span.[14]

One of the main problems teachers have in teaching comprehension, according to Gans, is the wholly subject-centered curriculum, based on memorization of textbook material rather than on the interests and needs of the pupils. Artificial, teacher-made problems and a strict system of marking are not interest substitutes for reading to suit the purpose of the individual child or the group.[15]

Comprehension abilities improved by direct teaching. Are comprehension abilities improved by direct teaching? Davis says that the abilities to remember disconnected word meanings, to use statements read, and to gain the main ideas of a selection are not subject to direct teaching, while the other comprehension abilities, dealing with definite skills, are quite readily taught. Robert Carroll's experiments

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[14] Ibid., p. 181.

[15] Roma Gans, Guiding Children's Reading (New York: Columbia University, 1946), pp. 49-50.

showed quite definitely that following directions could be improved by teaching and practice.[16]

Methods suggested for teaching comprehension. Various authors offer suggestions for increasing reading comprehension. One way of increasing comprehension in the classroom is to stress obtaining the meaning from the reading matter, or reading for a particular purpose. Every student needs to be able to tell the meaning of what he has read. A very poor reader or a word-caller might have to begin learning this skill by telling only the meaning of paragraphs of easy fiction material. As his ability to discern the meaning from paragraphs improved, he would gradually learn to tell the meanings of longer reading passages in textbooks.[17] The teacher might ask for the main ideas or for a number of details, pose questions to be answered from the reading, present problems to be answered by drawing inferences, ask for evidence to substantiate or disprove a conclusion, ask the children to outline the material read, discuss the material read, ask them to read directions silently and follow them, or construct test questions on the lesson. A few

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[16]Marjorie Seddon Johnson, "Factors in Reading Comprehension," Educational Administration and Supervision, XXXV (November, 1949), 400-401.

[17]Edward William Dolch, A Manual for Remedial Reading (Champaign, Illinois: The Garrard Press, 1950), pp. 39-40.

carefully chosen and well-formulated questions to be answered from the reading matter foster correct training especially well.[18]

Other methods of increasing comprehension include telling a part of the story read, and having the children complete it orally.[19] This gives several children the opportunity to participate in a progressive story, or, if desired, a dramatization.

One researcher found that a particularly weak child could be helped by the teacher's taking down and typing the reading story as the child told it, and having the child re-read this version of the story.[20]

A student might be motivated to select a chapter; read the introduction, chapter headings, and conclusion; and then answer, by careful reading, questions made from the chapter headings, and write these answers on cards. He would then learn the information on the answer cards, shift the order, and, checking himself, answer the questions again. This is recommended for all types of studying.[21]

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[18]Cole, op. cit., pp. 205-206.

[19]Gertrude Hildreth and Josephine L. Wright, Helping Children to Read (New York: Columbia University, 1940), p. 56.

[20]Marion Monroe, Children Who Cannot Read (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1932), p. 136.

[21]Homer L.J. Carter and Dorothy J. McGinnis, Learning to Read (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1953), pp. 143-144.

As has been stated earlier in this paper, pupils who are word-readers are greatly handicapped in comprehension. This fault might be corrected by reading disconnected, then connected, phrases. The student will thus gradually form the habit of reading by phrases.[22]

Before the child gets too accustomed to repeating the exact words or ideas of the textbook, he should be introduced to questions requiring thought. This is done by having him choose the main ideas of the reading material, and studying these to see the implications of what is said.[23]

Teaching a child to have a reaction to what he reads is, of course, best taught by having him read something that will arouse some kind of strong feeling within him. This attention to reactionary material frequently keeps the child from repeating the words of the book in answering questions.[24]

Another way of increasing comprehension is to teach the children to look for the clues to the author's most important points. Italics, paragraph headings, and paragraphs themselves are examples of these guideposts to the meaning of the author. Attention to these details, rather than attempting to outline the material, is recommended.[25]

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[22] Harris, op. cit., p. 280.

[23] Dolch, op. cit., p. 43.

[24] Ibid., p. 45.

[25] Ibid., pp. 290-291.

In teaching the child to read critically, the teacher must build backgrounds, and must eliminate prejudices. The individual must test the statements of the book against his knowledge, and his knowledge in view of the statements. Then, he needs much practice in using this difficult skill.[26]

Children should be taught, furthermore, to understand the relationship between sentences in paragraphs, and between paragraphs in a selection. Many pupils need guidance in seeing these relationships, and in discussing which passages are explanatory, and which ones are amplifying material. This comprehension skill can be taught by helping the children look for the special kinds of material, and by giving them practice in determining the significance of the parts of a selection.[27]

Limitations of previous studies. A number of authors seem to agree that the job of the teacher in comprehension is to teach the various phases of comprehension concurrently, and to aid the children in selecting the proper use for pursuing the reading job at hand.[28] There seems to be no suggested way of teaching the child to follow such a

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[26]Bond and Bond, op. cit., p. 241.

[27]Miles A. Tinker, Teaching Elementary Reading (New York: Appleton-Century Crofts, Inc., 1952), p. 182.

[28]Bond and Bond, op. cit., p. 210.

selection process, and only limited information about the ways of teaching the various comprehension skills individually. How, then, may a sixth grade teacher, realizing the need for the teaching of comprehension, go about carrying on such a program?

CHAPTER III

SUMMARY OF THE FINDINGS

This study was made by summarizing the results of fifty-four interviews. The group surveyed included teachers from Charlotte, North Carolina, and other fifth, sixth, and seventh grade teachers enrolled in the 1956 Summer School Session at Appalachian State Teachers College, Boone, North Carolina. The latter group included teachers from five states other than North Carolina.

Ways of determining level of comprehension. All the teachers interviewed used a variety of methods in deciding how well the children understood what they read, but the way mentioned most often was the use of teacher-prepared tests. Oral reading and teacher-prepared oral tests were second in frequency of times mentioned. Many of those interviewed emphasized the fact that such teacher-prepared tests should be carefully formulated, and that questions of varying degrees of difficulty should be used with children at different ability levels.

Only eighteen of the teachers listed workbooks as a way of determining the comprehension level of each child. Some of those not using workbooks did not think them a valuable aid. Others teach in systems where workbooks are not permitted. Careful use of workbooks as a tool for learn-

ing, rather than as a crutch for overworked teachers, was stressed.

About half of the teachers used standardized tests other than the achievement test. The California Reading Test was mentioned most often. No one doubted that good standardized tests were the best measures of comprehension ability, but many of the teachers taught in a locale where the limited budget prevented extensive use of standardized tests.

Ten teachers listed prepared reading tests from children's newspapers and magazines and from reading textbooks as especially helpful. The most popular periodicals with this feature were: My Weekly Reader, Read Magazine, Current Events, and Junior Scholastic. These publications were also mentioned for motivation and for extending outside reading. Traveling New Trails, published by Lyons and Carnahan, was listed as a textbook with good questions testing comprehension.

Oral discussion and group or individual reports on material read were mentioned by six teachers as fairly accurate tests of comprehension. Two other teachers mentioned specifically that book reports, whether oral or written, or taking the form of pictures, bulletin boards, and craft work, were quite good.

A few teachers used the Reader's Digest Skill Builders and the accompanying tests for this purpose, while

others preferred to have the children make their own questions on important material read, and perhaps have contests based on the questions. Taking note of the overall quality of a child's work in many subjects was also mentioned.

Other means of determining the total quality of a child's comprehension were mentioned only once. These included: the making of notebooks, the studying of home assignments, the using of workbook tests, exchanging good tests with other sixth and seventh grade teachers, conversing with the individual child, and the use of records. The latter method involved having the child read and, after a period of time, re-read for an additional record to show his progress.

Organizing the class for teaching comprehension. Opinion was divided as to the best situation in which to teach comprehension. A little more than half of the people interviewed stated that it was best to teach the class as a whole in most cases, giving individual help to particularly weak pupils. This group felt that the children who were not up to grade level in achievement could profit from the discussion of the more advanced pupils, and that weak students would have a greater feeling of success if they were allowed to work in the large group as much as possible.

The next larger group, also about half, emphasized that the advanced, the average, and the slow-learning pupils

could all benefit more from ability grouping as often as possible. This group thought that the small groups, with books of graduated degrees of difficulty, and through association with pupils of approximately the same achievement level, were more efficient.

Only one person attempted to teach reading comprehension to individuals in most circumstances. Several other teachers felt that such a system might prove effective with a very small class, if and when they had such a situation. One teacher said that he used ability grouping and individual help almost equally, and three teachers replied that they use each of the three systems about equally.

There was a variety of answers given as to the approximate amount of time that should be spent on teaching reading comprehension during the school day. The range was from a minimum of twenty minutes to a maximum of constant emphasis on activities related to reading throughout the day, with about one hour mentioned most frequently. Table I shows that one person each mentioned twenty to thirty minutes, thirty to forty-five minutes, thirty-five to forty minutes, and one to two hours. Each of these teachers explained that the times mentioned would vary according to whether the class was primarily a rather advanced, an average, or a slow group. Two teachers felt there should be no time limit given, since their classes have varied so much over the years. One

TABLE I

AMOUNT OF TIME SPENT IN TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION DURING THE SCHOOL DAY

Amount of Time	Number of Teachers
20 minutes	2
20 to 30 minutes	1
30 minutes	6
35 to 40 minutes	1
40 minutes	1
30 to 45 minutes	1
45 minutes	4
1 hour	16
1 hour and 15 minutes	1
1 hour and 30 minutes	4
1 hour and 45 minutes	1
1 to 2 hours	1
2 hours	4
3 hours	2
Constantly Throughout the Day	7
Dependent on the Class	2

teacher suggested it was better to spend one hour three times a week than thirty minutes five days a week.

As shown in Table II, the part of the actual reading period spent in teaching the reading comprehension skills varied from one-fourth of the time to practically all of it, with the largest number using about one-half of the time for teaching these skills. The second highest number of teachers mentioned one-third as a fair share of time. Four teachers said the time varied according to the general ability of the class.

In most cases the reading period averaged between forty-five minutes and one hour. One fifth grade teacher was required to have two hours of reading instruction daily. Many of the teachers suggested following manuals in the teaching of the comprehension skills, so that important learnings would be included at rather definite times, and, too, so that there would be only the necessary repetition of teaching skills in the succeeding grades.

Providing for individual differences. Of the ways teachers tried to meet the individual needs of the children and provide for individual differences, using varied material and ability grouping were mentioned most often, and about the same number of times. The teachers or children chose material, if the latter were given guidance in their selections. This varied subject matter has been used widely

TABLE II

PART OF FORMAL READING PERIOD SPENT IN TEACHING READING COMPREHENSION

Part of Period	Number of Teachers
one-fourth	5
one-fourth to one-third	1
one-third	13
one-fourth to one-half	1
one-half	23
two-thirds	2
three-fourths	3
practically all	2
dependent on class	4

both as a basic part of the reading program, and for free and supplementary material in and out of the classroom. Choosing graduated reading material with a high interest level has been found to be very valuable in ability grouping. It was suggested by several teachers that all groups should be reading about the same subject whenever possible, and that roundtable discussions were good.

One teacher has found ability reading clubs especially valuable. Besides being able to read the same basal reading and social studies matter, they were also able to read and recommend library books for the other children in the "club." Since the clubs were flexible, the children did not seem to feel isolated with the same group.

Another teacher has found it helpful to keep little cards with the child's name indicated and his reading skill weaknesses represented by symbols known only to the teacher. He then called varying groups together for practice in difficult skills. This practice sometimes took the form of a contest, with boys on one side, and girls on the other.

A number of people suggested giving individual aid to those who wanted or needed it. Though much of this help was of a remedial nature, the advanced students often sought assistance in carrying on projects or doing involved research on their own.

TABLE III

METHODS OF MEETING INDIVIDUAL DIFFERENCES

Method	Number of Teachers
Providing Varied Material on Different Levels	27
Grouping	23
Reading for the Group as a Whole	14
Doing Various Types of Extra Work at the Child's Interest Level	9
Varying Requirements, Giving Tests of Graduated Difficulties, and Ability Marking	5
Giving Individual Help	5
Having Capable Students Help Weak Ones	4
Organizing Special Interest Committees	3
Using Pupil Interest Inventories	2
Forming Ability Reading Clubs	1
Dividing Groups According To Reading Skills Weaknesses	1

Having capable students do extra work at their interest levels was another way of meeting individual needs. This method might involve using encyclopedias and other reference material, doing outside reading, or making scrapbooks on interesting reading material. This reading might give impetus to drawing or sketching, map-making, or making friezes. These students sometimes enjoyed writing letters for materials for use in the major units of the class. This often involved further reading to gain the necessary background of the materials desired.

Capable students often did a good job of helping weak ones. The teacher was cautious to see that too much of the student's time was not utilized in this way. Often such an arrangement gave the advanced student a feeling of success, and the weak student, a chance to associate closely with a fellow classmate. One teacher had a good reader read a story to the weaker ones, walking around them as he read, and they followed in their books. The weaker ones might then participate in the total-class discussion. Student aid, further, was enjoyed occasionally by those who needed almost constant help.

Varying requirements, giving oral and written tests of graduated difficulty, and ability marking have been mentioned as desirable. Using different methods for teaching different pupils has also been suggested. This would include

such things as looking ahead for ideas too advanced for the weak students. All these things would be included in trying to provide the same information on several vocabulary levels.

Special interest committees or groups, not based on ability, art work about the reading material, creative plays, and pantomimes might include pupils of all levels, contributing as they were able. These projects gave the weaker students a chance to work with more capable ones, and the capable students might thereby be stimulated to do more creative work.

Several teachers tried to provide for individual differences by having basic reading with the class as a whole as much as possible. One had reading instruction in this manner at least three times weekly. These entire-group instruction periods could be particularly valuable if the teacher prepared the group through building concepts and meanings, word recognition skills, and reading readiness; all these provided a general background for understanding.

Pupil interest inventories, such as the famous one by Paul Witty, were helpful in setting the stage for reading, as was the defining of definite purposes for reading. The diagnostic approach was truly a beneficial one.

Chief factors encountered by the teachers in poor silent-reading comprehension. The teachers listed the first, second, and third problems in the order of prevalence they

had observed in the poor silent-reading of children. In all three categories limited meaning vocabulary was listed as the biggest difficulty. Several methods of attacking this deficiency were mentioned. A self-made pupil word book, with difficult words encountered listed alphabetically, and content varying with the ability and experience of the individual, has proved helpful. Other teachers utilized the exceptional knowledge of advanced students in clarifying word meanings for the class; this knowledge was supplemented through use of personal dictionaries. Frequent review of word meanings in a contest situation has produced results, as have definite, challenging drills.

Lack of interest was cited as the second largest difficulty. Though one teacher thought such a problem reflected the work of the teacher, others felt that lack of extensive supplementary materials, limited home cooperation, and slow learners contributed to the situation. Sometimes the fault lay in overlapping of materials in various grades within a system. Several teachers mentioned that new material always helped.

The third most frequently stated difficulty was not enough practice in reading for various purposes. Lack of proper training and too difficult reading material were often mentioned. Mental incapability was next.

Minor problems realized seem to be lack of proper thought-unit reading, narrow experience range, carelessness, too much stress on speed, inappropriate rate of reading for that type material, congenital word blindness, poor eye-movement habits, and poor vision, in approximately the order given.

Chief factors encountered by the teachers in poor oral-reading comprehension. Again in poor oral-reading comprehension, poor meaning vocabulary was the most frequently mentioned problem. Second was the stress on pronunciation and expression, rather than on meaning. Several teachers said that such stress often originated in the child himself, in striving to gain status within the group.

Lack of interest was again listed as a big problem, and mental inability seemed to be a bigger problem here than in silent reading. Those slow-learning students were sometimes aware of their deficiency, and were fearful of reading orally, in addition to the natural steps involved.

Limited eye-voice span was evidenced here, and, of course, such was not the case in silent reading. Several teachers said that practice in reading orally would be the best way of developing eye-voice coordination for effective oral reading.

Other problems realized less often were prevalent in about the following order: congenital word blindness,

slowness at sight vocabulary (write-in), carelessness (write-in), faulty breathing habits, and poor vision.

Phases of comprehension taught and methods used. Every teacher interviewed felt that sixth graders should be taught to read for problem-solving. Many, however, expressed a desire to learn more ways of getting children to solve problems independently. Verbal problems in arithmetic were mentioned most often as the type of problems children solve in school. Various steps the children were learning as an attack for these problems were given, but the general trend was to have the children find the continuity of thought, the definitions of any unfamiliar words, the facts that were given, and the information that must be obtained by working the problem. Many children had to list this information on the paper before beginning to do the number work. Another aid suggested by one teacher was to have the children locate each number, whether arabic or verbal, and find the facts that went with each number. Having the children work everyday, personal arithmetic problems, and to do enough repetition of the various types of written problems were stressed by some teachers. Working as individuals or in groups, children have found the area of rooms for building, repair, or painting, and have performed science experiments.

Changing verbal problems in arithmetic to language familiar to the locality was found helpful at one location.

Careful background reading, reporting, and discussion to kindle interest and enthusiasm for some types of problems were helpful. Talking about the verbal problems, working, and re-checking the problems was listed as a good, though time-consuming, method of teaching children to solve verbal problems. Workbooks have occasionally been used to teach problem-solving.

One class worked to raise its general health level through reading about and observing proper health practices. Fifteen teachers have found that teaching reference skills and encouraging extensive use of encyclopedias and other reference books have been the basis for solving many problems. Whether the problem involved was brought about through the children's interests, or was carefully set up by the teacher, the study should be clearly defined before the research work begins. At first it might be necessary to write questions, have oral discussion, and refer the class to particular sources. Giving the children ways of attacking problems, such as planning trips, without help was the ultimate goal of such training.

Two teachers said problems in social studies could best be solved through a combination of direct questioning, and step-by-step questioning as the research was being done. Others have children formulate questions or problems in social studies to be investigated. An interesting geography

TABLE IV

NUMBER OF TEACHERS TEACHING EACH TYPE OF READING COMPREHENSION AND CHIEF METHODS USED

Types of Comprehension Taught	Number of Teachers Answering: Yes	No
I. Reading for Problem-Solving	54	0
A. Solving Verbal Problems in Arithmetic	30	
B. Using Reference Material	15	
C. Employing Direct Questioning and Step-by-Step Questioning in Social Studies	2	
D. Testing the Children	2	
E. Playing Team Games	2	
F. Working on a Common Class Problem	1	
G. Having Children Formulate Questions or Problems to be Studied	1	
H. Having Children Make Suggestions About Solving Problems of Other Countries	1	
I. Listing Ideas for Research on the Board	1	
J. Using Crossword Puzzles About the Reading Stories	1	
K. Having Reading Contests	1	
II. Reading to Follow Directions	53	1
A. Following Simple Written Class Directions Without Help	20	
B. Giving Many Think-and-Do Exercises	18	
C. Giving Help With Harder Directions Before Starting	15	
D. Having Children Project Themselves Into the Selections	6	
E. Following Well-Written Test Directions	5	
III. Reading to Gather and Organize Materials	52	2

TABLE IV (CONTINUED)

Types of Comprehension Taught	Number of Teachers Answering: Yes	No
A.Using Individual or Class-Made Outlines	24	
B.Using Reference Materials	16	
C.Doing Oral and Written Reports	10	
D.Making Social Studies Booklets, Notebooks, or Scrapbooks	9	
E.Writing Summaries	8	
F.Working on Units	5	
G.Preparing Committee Reports	5	
H.Dramatizing Material Read	2	
I.Using Workbooks	1	
J.Giving Oral Tests	1	
K.Having Debates	1	
L.Emphasizing Poster-Making	1	
M.Making Bulletin Boards	1	
N.Re-arranging Sentences in Logical Order	1	
O.Playing the Game:"Who Am I?"	1	
P.Doing Oral Outlining of a Story Read to the Class	1	
Q.Planning an Imaginary Trip	1	
IV.Reading to Get the Main Thought: Skimming	50	4
A.Using Direct Questioning	16	
B.Giving Guide Questions	10	
C.Having Written Exercises of Various Types	10	
D.Using Oral Instructions and Exercises	10	
E.Finding Topic Sentences and Main Topics	9	
F.Doing Pleasure Reading and Follow-Up Reports	5	
G.Giving Timed Readings	3	
H.Employing Film-Reader Units	1	
V.Reading to Interpret	50	4

TABLE IV (CONTINUED)

Types of Comprehension Taught	Number of Teachers Answering: Yes	No
A.Having Oral Discussion	12	
B.Giving Written Exercises	9	
C.Doing Direct Questioning	6	
D.Using Oral Reading	6	
E.Dramatizing Material Read	6	
F.Conversing With Individuals	6	
G.Supplementing, Extending, and Strengthening Interpretation Skills	5	
VI.Reading to Remember Details	49	5
A.Providing Direct Questions	20	
B.Giving Oral and Written Tests	12	
C.Having Oral Discussion	12	
D.Doing Outlining	12	
E.Using Written Questions and and Exercises	8	
F.Dramatizing Reading Matter	3	
G.Drawing	2	
H.Playing "Baseball"	2	
I.Using Film-Reader Units	1	
VII.Reading to Predict Outcomes	40	14
A.Stopping Story Before It is Finished	29	
B.Writing Predictions	8	
C.Predicting Outcomes of Stories Being Read to the Class	3	
D.Determining the Influence of the Past on Present-Day History	2	
E.Trying to Predict If the Character Is a Family Man	1	
F.Using Guide Questions: Predict Before Reading Is Started	1	
G.Anticipating the Outcomes of Science Experiments Through Reading	1	
H.Foreseeing How a Character Will Behave in Adult Life	1	
I.Suggesting the Outcomes of Ball-games and Elections	1	

TABLE IV (CONTINUED)

Types of Comprehension Taught	Number of Teachers Answering: Yes	No
J.Forecasting the Coming Events in a Continued Story	1	
K.Predicting Outcomes in Citizenship and Health	1	
L.Using Outcomes to Predict Beginnings	1	
VIII.Reading to Test the Truthfulness of a Passage	33	21
A.Using Reference Materials	19	
B.Asking Children to Discriminate Between Fact and Opinion Through Oral Discussion	6	
C.Comparing Science Stories or Old Science Books With Scientific Fact	2	
D.Testing, Observing, and Experimenting in Science	2	
E.Using True-False Questions	2	
F.Reading Exaggerated Materials	2	
IX.Reading to Make Inferences	32	22
A.Employing Direct Thought Questions	15	
B.Pointing Out Directly and Discussing Orally	10	
C.Getting Word Meanings from Contextual Clues	4	
D.Formulating the Cause-Effect Relationship	2	
E.Testing	2	
X.Reading to Sense the Emotional Overtones of the Author	26	28
A.Having Oral Discussion and Oral Reading	11	
B.Applying Direct Questioning	7	
C.Doing Background Reading and Discussion Before the Selection Is Read	6	
D.Pointing Out, Reading Both Sides, and Discussing Orally	3	

TABLE IV (CONTINUED)

Types of Comprehension Taught	Number of Teachers Answering: Yes	No
XI. Reading to Detect Irony	16	38
A. Pointing Out and Discussing	8	
B. Having Advanced Students Discover and Interpret Such Passages on Their Own	6	
C. Testing	2	
XII. Other Types Taught		
A. Word Attack	6	
1. Giving Word Meanings from Context	3	
2. Telling Orally Words That Gave Trouble in Silent Reading	1	
3. Formulating Word Associations	1	
4. Using Dictionaries	1	
B. Reading to Develop Attitudes (Oral Discussion)	1	
C. Reading to Verify Colors (Reading Books for Reference)	1	
D. Doing Selective Reading (Reading Newspapers; Discussing)	1	

problem one class undertook to work out was trying to find some ways in which some foreign lands could solve their problems. Reading detailed information several times, and listing ideas for research on the board has proved effective. Testing was sometimes used as a check on any of these class activities.

One class found that crossword puzzles accompanying the reading stories were problems often involving research. One teacher has used reading contests for problem-solving, in which the children tried to be first in solving a given problem. Others have found team contests of a similar nature helpful. A "Ring the Bell" contest suggested by a teacher operated on the same principle, except that a bell rang when a teammate had answered incorrectly, and the statement needed correction.

All but one of the teachers interviewed indicated that children must be taught to read to follow directions at or before the sixth grade level. Different types of written class directions seemed to be the most prevalent. Suggestions as to methods of teaching the children to follow such directions varied, but the general trend was to begin in the lower grades with all oral directions, and gradually begin using a combination of written and oral directions. By the sixth grade level the teachers felt that, if the directions had a real purpose, were carefully worded, and were rather easy to

follow, the children should be able to follow them without help. The goal, of course, was to develop independent thinking on the part of the children.

If the directions were more difficult, many teachers had the children to read the directions silently, ask for any needed help, and then do the work on their own, with a penalty of around five points from the mark on the paper for not following directions accurately. The same general rule applied to test directions, with an additional suggestion that such instructions be worded carefully, without ambiguous statements. Six teachers practiced having the children put themselves in the place of the person in a situation set up in verbal problems or in workbooks. Think-and-do exercises in all subjects, such as the "Citizenship Quiz" in a children's newspaper, have proved valuable to eighteen teachers.

Having the children give oral directions to the teacher on those that have been read silently, or having the directions dramatized created interest in careful reading. Written games or quizzes to see how well directions were understood were popular. These methods employed direct questions and thought questions as a review of information read silently. Following instructions was clearly evidenced in the following art activities: following color directions given in reading, using Sketcho with turpentine as suggested,

and making blueprints with peroxide as the directions stated. Map studies, crossword puzzles on the reading material, and science experiments also revealed a child's achievement in this skill. Having specific directions to be followed in order was desirable, and individual reading folders on a child's ability level have been used. These folders have suitable reading material, and exercises on the reading matter to be done according to the directions given.

All except two of the teachers interviewed attempted to teach the children to read to gather and organize materials. Outlines were used extensively in organizing such material. These were simple at first, but became more complex as the children developed more skill. Oral or written reports, for regular or special credit, were often made from these outlines. Some classes took notes in their own words from about four sources before the outline was written. One class occasionally worked on common outlines together.

Though some outlining was done on material in the textbooks, encyclopedias and other reference materials were widely used. The room library, home library, and school library were utilized in this program. Other popular projects involving organizing reference material included: making social studies booklets, notebooks, or scrapbooks; working on units; preparing committee reports; and making

summaries of the material read. Several teachers mentioned that the children could profit by having a teacher-pupil planning period to set up major questions to be answered and problems to be solved.

Other aids to teaching children to gather and organize materials were suggested only once: workbooks, oral tests, debates, poster-making, and bulletin boards. Re-arranging sentences from My Weekly Reader in a logical order was mentioned, as was the game "Who Am I?" The latter was played by having the children gather and organize material about outstanding characters; and, when the information was given, having the class guess whom the person had represented.

One teacher said that she read a story and had the class give orally the introduction, the body, and the conclusion of the selection. The story "How Baby Was Saved" was suggested as appropriate for having the children do such outlining through oral discussion.

One teacher used a six-week's project involving materials used in a core curriculum. The children planned an imaginary trip to any state or country. They had to gather material concerning the cost of the trip, the language of the people, the customs, health conditions, living conditions, and the features of interest. After all the material was gathered and organized, the children each presented an oral report about his "trip" to the class. The teacher found the

project to be both interesting and challenging to the students.

Fifty of the fifty-four teachers interviewed believed that the children should be taught to skim or get the main thought. Asking direct questions was used most often. This was sometimes done before reading the selection, and at other times the material had been pre-read. Choosing the topic sentence and the main topics, or listing the important parts in any order, were often used in helping the children to learn the skimming skill.

Some teachers felt that this skill could be best taught through listing or mentioning guide questions before the selection was read, so that the children knew what to look for. Thought questions also served as a basis for good follow-up discussions of the material read. Whether these questions were formulated by the teacher or listed in a textbook or manual, it was stressed that they should be carefully worded and wisely used.

Pleasure reading in an easy book was found to be a good way of extending and strengthening the skimming skill. When children were encouraged to tell their favorite part of the book or story, to dramatize an exciting part, or to read an interesting bit to the class, they were learning to look for the most important parts of the book. Such practice helped them in selecting the main ideas in books read outside

class, and telling some of these sometimes stimulated interest in reading in and out of the class.

Written exercises mentioned in connection with teaching the skimming skill included: having the children summarize the reading in one sentence, or in a few sentences; giving written tests involving only the main ideas; choosing a suitable title for a paragraph or other selection; having the children write questions to ask each other; setting up completion sentences to be answered quickly from a paragraph or story, and having the children to try to be first in answering; and having the children choose the main idea from multiple suggestions.

Oral instructions and exercises included: asking the children to get the overall picture from subject matter; asking them to look for the key word, and to tell the class when it was found; asking the children to verify or disprove a point by finding a statement quickly and reading it to the class; and telling the children to glance over material given in reference books, and find what they wanted to read. Three teachers found that timed readings, in which children knew the limits, were successful.

The use of film-reader units were used to advantage in one situation. This unit of materials included films and reading matter giving essentially the same information on various subjects. Through using both books and films, slow-learning children profited from the repetition. Other type

groups sometimes enjoyed the pictures following the reading as a review, or for more detailed remembering.

All but four of the teachers interviewed attempted to teach the children to do reading to interpret, as may be noted in Table IV. Oral discussion was the most frequently mentioned method. In such discussions pupils referred to other parts of the textbook, to the dictionary, or to reference books for help in making an interpretation. Since explaining the various definitions of a single word might be a tool to the interpretation, many teachers used direct questioning concerning the meaning of terms. Some children were given guide questions stressing thought, and were encouraged to use pictorial aids and punctuation marks as guides to the full meaning of the selection. Tying in the reading material with movies previously seen, or with programs in the auditorium has proved successful.

Oral interpretation has also included oral reading of poetry, of Aesop's Fables, and of meaningful prose selections. Dramatization of such material as the "Blue Willow Plate" in Wings to Adventure gave the children an opportunity to give full vent to their interpretative skills. Having the children give an oral reproduction of a story in their own words revealed their interpretative powers. Oral or written book reports were also useful in determining a child's ability in this skill.

Other written exercises, comprising the second most frequently mentioned method, included tests; interpreting the author's meaning in one sentence; outlining; selecting phrases from the reading to put on the board for interpretation; using workbooks for silent reading, with follow-up questions requiring interpretation; and summarizing the material.

The teachers supplemented the children's experiential backgrounds with films, pictures, slides, maps, exhibits, and varied materials. Learning to interpret charts, graphs, and maps was one phase of the interpretative skill. Using songs, such as "Botany Bay," to supplement reading helped in widening the children's horizons. Drawing pictures of ideas gained from the story was found helpful in extending and strengthening the interpretation phase of comprehension.

Forty-nine of the teachers taught the children to read to remember details. As may be seen in Table IV, the most common method was through the use of direct questions, this time involving details. These questions, for the most part, were not pre-stated before the initial reading of the selection. Factual information of this type often involved re-reading of the material to find such detailed descriptions as were needed to characterize people or to visualize buildings.

Oral or written tests of important details, given immediately following the reading of a selection, have been used to advantage by twelve teachers. Some teachers felt that this method was more effective if the children were given some guide questions or information prior to the reading. Others felt that it was wise to tell the children to read to remember important details for a short check-up. These instructions were used frequently enough that they did not produce undue tension.

Discussing the details orally in the large group has produced the desired results for another twelve persons. In such a situation the children might be asked to tell the part enjoyed most in silent reading, or the discussion might go along the logical sequence of events. Questions about the details of the story, or thought questions based on details, were sometimes not only desirable, but, necessary. This period sometimes included having the children cite answers and read them to the class. These same techniques have been employed with special ability groups, when the story material was not available to the entire class.

Various techniques for outlining were also popular with a dozen teachers. While some teachers preferred formal outlining of the detailed events, others merely had the children to list the happenings in the proper sequence. It has been profitable to have the pupils do individual outlines

following the correct form for material organized in a rather logical manner. Several teachers found that, for particularly difficult reading matter, having the class work together on a common outline written on the board was more desirable.

Activities of several types have been utilized in teaching children to remember details of selections read. The film-reader units described earlier in this paper have been used, as have contests such as "baseball." The latter was a game in which various areas in the room were designated as "home plate," "first base," "second base," and "third base." As a child answered a question from the reading correctly, he was able to advance to the next "base." If a child failed to answer the question correctly, he was "out." Three outs retired the side, and the other team came "to bat." Having the children draw a scene described in the reading, or to do a detailed dramatization, has also been found helpful.

Written exercises were widely used for this purpose. Prepared questions in Junior Scholastic and other newspapers have been recommended for both checking on silent reading, and in determining if the children were able to find answers when the pre-read material was at hand. Pupils have been asked to group the related things in the story together, or to re-read the material, and make notes of important details. Summaries have been written, or notebooks made. One teacher

found that having the children choose the important points, and taking a test from those listed, was good. Detailed reading has been stressed in reading verbal problems in arithmetic, and in using an index to locate special material. Several types of reading for details were introduced by listing on the board phrases to be located in the selection.

About seventy-five per cent of the teachers interviewed taught the children to read to predict outcomes. Most often this was done by stopping the silent reading before the story was finished, and predicting the outcome. The latter was done by direct questioning, oral discussion, and locating clues. One teacher remarked that television influenced children to be more proficient in this ability.

Eight teachers had the children write their predictions about the ending of the story. It was suggested that these be saved and read orally after the actual story had been completed. Picture clues were mentioned as valuable aids to predicting outcomes.

Sometimes the children were asked to list the facts given earlier in a story such as "The Good River," in predicting why the "good river" became a "bad river" to the main character. When the children were listening to stories read by their classmates or the teacher, they were sometimes asked to predict the outcome before the story was presented

in its entirety.

In history tests two teachers found it valuable to have the children try to predict the influence the past had on current events. Other methods mentioned only once each included: trying to predict if a character was a family man: as Jim Thorpe in Silver Chief; giving guide questions that would involve predicting outcomes before the reading was started; reading to predict outcomes of science experiments; predicting how a character would behave in adult life: in a character-building group of stories; prognosticating the outcomes of ballgames and elections; predicting coming events in continued stories in News Time; and having the children predict outcomes in citizenship or health. One teacher found it interesting, for variety, to use the outcomes to predict the beginnings of reading material.

A little more than sixty per cent of the teachers interviewed taught reading to test the truthfulness of a passage. This type of critical reading, they felt, was best taught through use of reference materials. The object of such instruction was to develop logical thinking. When doubt as to the truthfulness of a passage was raised in such subjects as science, social studies, or literature, the pupils were urged to check the facts to substantiate or disprove the doubtful statement. It was sometimes necessary to refer the children to particular sources, but the

teachers agreed that the pupils should develop independence as soon as possible.

Asking the children to discriminate between fact and opinion through oral discussion was second in frequency, as shown in Table IV. The children used material gained from past experience in evaluating the doubtful passages. Letting the children correct each other and arrive at some conclusion about the truthfulness of a passage was also used.

Other methods were mentioned only twice each. These included comparing science stories or old science books with scientific facts; testing, observing, and experimenting in science; using true-false questions as a test of recognizing true passages; and reading exaggerated material that would obviously have little kinship to truth.

Reading to make inferences was considered desirable for sixth graders by a little more than half of the teachers questioned. Others felt that this skill could be taught more advantageously to more mature students. Thought questions to guide capable students before reading a selection, or as the basis for a follow-up discussion, encouraged the pupils to do this careful-type thinking. Direct questions such as, "What kind of man was this?" "Why was this done?" or "What conveniences did they have then?" have been helpful in getting the children to draw inferences on the basis of the author's statements.

Several teachers have often found it necessary to point out certain statements, or to help the children locate good material from which to make inferences. These passages were then discussed orally. Such discussions included statements from arithmetic written problems, or, more often, literature passages. Children's opinions and comparisons were given and conclusions were formed.

One teacher had the children make the inference through telling the full import of word meanings from contextual clues. Sometimes certain passages were read aloud, and each child wrote a summary of the implied meanings he had gathered. When statements about a locale's latitude, longitude, and rainfall were read, inferences were made as to the kinds of work the people probably did. In the reading textbooks and in map study the pupils found clues and worked out a cause and effect relationship. Again, testing, especially in science and social studies, proved effective.

Nearly half of the teachers interviewed attempted to teach reading to sense the emotional overtones of the author. Some use of direct questioning was evidenced by the study. Asking children the purpose of the book or the reason for the story's ending in a special way were mentioned as good ways of getting the children to get the full emotional feeling of a selection. Oral discussion and oral reading were mentioned first, however, as ways of teaching this skill. Bringing in

figurative language, descriptive passages, humor, and pathos were considered quite good by one teacher. Besides these things oral reading to sense the emotional overtones included having the pupils read with expression or dramatize passages enjoyed silently, or to read poetry from Arbuthnot's Time for Poetry or other anthologies. The teacher could thus see if the child realized the emotional impact of the writing.

Some teachers found it best to point out certain passages in which various author's emotions colored the statements, and, after the children had had a chance tc read both sides of the question, discuss the selections with the class. This was particularly true of sectionalism seen in a few writings. It was emphasized that the pupils should be encouraged to read with discrimination, and to learn to question; this method, these teachers felt, would eventually help children do this independently.

Background reading and discussion before a selection with strong emotional feeling was read has proved helpful. One way of doing this was to study the age or period of the story, and to tie this information in with the events. Social studies and reading were often correlated in this manner. The teacher might also acquaint the children with the author and his style of writing, or his personality. After the children have read the selection they might cite paragraphs that characterized the author.

Almost one-third of the teachers attempted to teach the children to detect irony. The most common method was to have the children point out and explain or discuss ironical statements, or, if necessary, the teacher helped them locate such statements. In either case the teacher had to draw from the children's experiences. Several teachers included in such discussions oral reading of these passages. A condition in "The King of the Golden River" in which Schwartz is in prison and Hans makes an ironical statement as he passes was cited as a good example. This statement was: "Good morning," said Hans. "Have you any message for the King of the Golden River?" (People and Progress, Page 444). Since Schwartz had failed in reaching the King, his brother was using this irony to ridicule him for his present state of affairs. One teacher found it helpful to give the children the literal meaning of a statement, and let them find out how the author said it.

Brighter children were often able to discover and interpret such passages without aid. They were given help if they asked for it. Newspapers and magazines, read by the more advanced students, had such statements. Testing the children on such material has been found helpful at times.

Several of the teachers interviewed listed other types of comprehension skills. Many of these concerned word attack. Even though word attack is often considered separate

from the comprehension skills, these methods will be listed here as necessary to complete understanding of a selection. Methods of learning word meanings mentioned were: learning to use and referring to the dictionary; getting word meanings from context clues; locating troublesome words by having the children tell the class what words gave them trouble in silent reading; and learning word associations through listing a group of words under such general headings as animal, vegetable, and mineral.

Reading to develop attitudes was suggested as another comprehension skill. The children were encouraged to discuss why characters acted as they did. They might then project themselves into the story, and apply the discussion to themselves.

Reading to verify colors for art work was mentioned as another comprehension skill taught.

The final comprehension skill listed was the teaching of selective reading. Through extensive practice, this teacher's students were encouraged to look for the significant news in the newspaper.

Books, periodicals, workbook-type materials, and other aids to teaching reading comprehension. As may be noted in Table V: A, a large number of books were listed as being particularly good for teaching reading comprehension. Of the seventy-four books and groups of books listed, People and

Progress, a sixth grade textbook published by Scott, Foreman and Company, was mentioned most often. Several stories in this book were mentioned as especially appealing to children, and conducive to building reading comprehension skills. These stories, mentioned only once each, were: "Marion Andrews, Lifesaver" (pp. 97-100), "Who's Scared of Bears?" (pp. 101-104), "A Letter for Nikias" (pp. 187-190), "The Good River" (pp. 194-198), "First Lady of China" (pp. 233-238), and "The King of the Golden River" (pp. 245-255).

The fifth grade book in the same series, Days and Deeds, was second in the number of times mentioned. Several teachers suggested using the stories in this book in the order given, and making a unit title of each chapter heading. Many teachers stressed using the manuals for these and other books listed.

Stories to Remember was listed five times as desirable in an adequate reading program. Besides having a "Regular Edition" at the sixth grade reading level, this book might also be obtained in the "Classmate Edition," with reading matter on the fifth grade level. The children might thus read the same stories at their own reading levels, and the teacher might follow in the "Bond Plan" manuals, which give the reading matter from both editions, as well as guides for the teacher. For convenience there is a separate division of the manual for each unit in the books. Both editions and

TABLE V

BOOKS, PERIODICALS, WORKBOOK-TYPE MATERIALS, AND OTHER AIDS RECOMMENDED

A. BOOKS

Grade Level	Title	Number of Times Listed
6	People and Progress	12
5	Days and Deeds	7
6	Bright Peaks	5
6	Stories to Remember	5
4	High Roads	4
5	Sky Lines	4
2-6	The American Adventure Series	3
5	Engine Whistles	3
6	Builders of the Old World	2
6-7	High Road to Glory	2
6	New Runaway Home	2
7	Paths and Pathfinders	2
7	The Story of American Democracy	2
4	The Times and Places	2
5	Trails to Treasure	2
5	Adventures Here and There	1
6	Adventures Now and Then	1
	Aesop's Fables	1
5-6	Blue Sky Book	1
6-7	Brave and Free	1
	Childhood of Famous Americans Series	1
3	Climbing Higher	1
4	Cross-Country	1
5	Days of Adventure	1
7	Discovery	1
7-12	Eight Treasured Stories	1
	Elson Readers	1
7-8	The Flying Trunk	1
5-6	Frontiers Old and New	1
5	Frontiers to Explore	1
5	Great Names in American History	1
4-5	Highroads and Byroads	1
6-8	Highways and Byways	1
4-5	History for Beginners	1
4-5	History of World Peoples	1

TABLE V (CONTINUED)

Grade Level	Title	Number of Times Listed
Teacher	How to Increase Reading Ability	1
4	It Must Be Magic	1
5-7	Jack Tales	1
3	Just Imagine	1
	Laidlaw's Book IV	1
3	Looking Ahead	1
4-6	Luck and Pluck	1
4	Meeting New Friends	1
5-7	Merry Hearts and Bold	1
5	More Days and Deeds	1
5	New Engine Whistles	1
6	New Ideas in Science	1
4	New Singing Wheels	1
4	The New Times and Places	1
8	North Carolina Geography	1
6	Old World Lands	1
6-7	On the Long Road	1
	Our American Heritage	1
6	Out of the Past	1
	The Past Lives Again	1
4	Paths to Follow	1
6-8	Real People Series	1
4	Roads to Everywhere	1
5	Runaway Home	1
4	Singing Wheels	1
	Six Great Stories	1
7-8	The Six Robbers	1
5	The Story of Our Country	1
	Tales from Shakespeare	1
6	These Are the Tales They Told	1
5	They Were Brave and Bold	1
	Thought-Study Readers	1
	Time for Poetry	1
7-12	Tom Sawyer	1
6-7	Traveling New Trails	1
7	True and Otherwise	1
6	Understanding Why	1

TABLE V (CONTINUED)

Grade Level	Title	Number of Times Listed
6	Widening Horizons	1
6	Wings to Adventure	1
	B. PERIODICALS	
1-6	My Weekly Reader	5
	Junior Scholastic	3
	News Week	1
	Read Magazine	1
	World News	1
	C. WORKBOOK-TYPE MATERIALS	
	Reader's Digest Skill Builders	5
	Think and Do Books	4
	Economy Workbooks	1
	Reading for Meaning	1
	Reading Skilltexts	1
	Study Skills	1
	D. OTHER AIDS	
	Films and Filmstrips	1
	Film-Reader Units	1
	Poetry: Seasonable	1
	Reading Games	1
	Records: Child-Made	1
	Records and Tape Recorder	1
	Rochester Occupational Reading Series	1

the "Bond Plan" Manuals are available for Days of Adventure, the fifth grade book, and Meeting New Friends, for the fourth grade. The last two books were only mentioned once, as may be noted in Table V: A.

The Reading for Meaning Series, published by Houghton Mifflin Company, was next in popularity. This series contains Bright Peaks, for sixth grade, Sky Lines, for fifth grade, and High Roads, for fourth grade. One teacher stated that these books were popular because of their bright pictures, both inside the text and on the cover, and because of their gradual influx of new words.

The American Adventure Series was next in the frequency of times mentioned. This is a series of fifteen books published by Wheeler Publishing Company, and varying in difficulty from the second to the sixth grade reading levels. One junior high school teacher interviewed has found that the interest level of these books extends into seventh and eighth grades. The books and their respective grade levels are as follows: Friday-the Arapaho Indian (second), Squanto and the Pilgrims (second), Pilot Jack Knight (third), Alec Majors (third), Chief Black Hawk (third), Dan Morgan-Rifleman (fourth), Cowboys and Cattle Trails (fourth), Kit Carson (fourth), Buffalo Bill (fifth), Wild Bill Hickok (fifth), Davy Crockett (fifth), Daniel Boone (sixth), Fur Trappers of the Old West (sixth), The Rush for Gold (sixth), and John

Paul Jones (sixth). A teacher's guide book may be purchased for each book for twenty-five cents each, and a general handbook for corrective reading may be obtained.

As may be noted in Table V: A, Engine Whistles, a reading book on the fifth grade level, was recommended by three teachers. This book, along with Singing Wheels for the fourth grade, and Runaway Home for the sixth grade make up the Alice and Jerry Basic Reading Program of the Row, Peterson Company. Each of the latter books was listed only once. A newer series, a sequel to this one, includes The New Runaway Home, mentioned twice, New Engine Whistles, suggested once, and New Singing Wheels, listed once.

Builders of the Old World and The Story of American Democracy, North Carolina state-adopted textbooks for sixth and seventh grade history, respectively, were mentioned twice each. Other books mentioned twice each were: High Road to Glory, The Times and Places, Trails to Treasure, and Paths and Pathfinders. The latter is the seventh grade book in Scott Foresman's Curriculum Foundation Series, with Days and Deeds and People and Progress. Other books, mentioned only once, may be noted in Table V: A.

My Weekly Reader was listed five times as a desirable periodical for teaching reading comprehension. This publication may be obtained at various reading levels. Junior Scholastic, mentioned only three times, was recommended

as valuable for advanced sixth graders. One teacher found this magazine's book-of-the-month club, with quality selections in paperbound backing, interesting to the class.

As may be noticed in Table V: B, Read Magazine, News Week (newspaper), and World News (newspaper), were mentioned only once each. News Week has been useful in issuing maps for advanced students, and World News has been suggested for its maps, and for material for oral reading and roundtable discussions.

Table V: C shows workbook-type material suggested by the teachers interviewed. Skill-Builders, published by Reader's Digest, was mentioned five times. The material in this series has been graded, and each copy has story material to be read, and follow-up questions to be answered.

The Think and Do Books, published by Scott, Foresman and Company to accompany the Curriculum Foundation Series of books, was listed four times. The teachers who liked these publications feel that, besides fitting well into the reading lessons using this series of books, they have been valuable in extending the skills taught during the reading period.

The Economy Workbooks, Reading for Meaning workbooks, Reading Skilltexts, and Study Skills were mentioned only once each. Reading Skilltexts are published by My Weekly Reader, and Study Skills are issued by Read Magazine. Read-

ing for Meaning Workbooks, by Girler and Coleman, vary from fourth to seventh grade reading level. The teacher who suggested the Economy Workbooks has found the ones on history, English, and science to be particularly valuable in aiding comprehension.

Other aids to teaching reading comprehension included having the children make records of their own oral reading, and using the Film Reader Units mentioned earlier in this paper. Table V: D shows that no aid was mentioned more than once. These helps to reading comprehension included: playing reading games stressing comprehension, reading poetry suitable to the season or sport, showing films and filmstrips, presenting records and tape recordings of experts reading poetry or plays, and using the Rochester Occupational Reading Series. The latter, consisting of stories about such things as restaurants and gas stations, was recommended for use with small groups whose reading level was not up to the sixth grade level.

CHAPTER IV

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This chapter includes a restating of the main ideas gathered from the study, the writer's conclusions on the basis of the findings, and recommendations for further studies in the field of reading comprehension.

I. SUMMARY OF THE MAIN FINDINGS

This study showed that the fifty-four teachers interviewed used various ways of deciding how well each child could comprehend material read, but that teacher-prepared written tests were used most often. Other frequently mentioned methods included teacher-prepared oral tests, oral reading, standardized tests other than the achievement tests, workbooks, and prepared reading tests from books and periodicals, in the order given.

Ideas concerning the best way of organizing the class for effective teaching of the reading comprehension skills were almost wholly divided between teaching the class as a whole and teaching ability groups, with the former having a slight plurality of the decisions. Only one of the teachers interviewed felt that comprehension could be best taught to the class as individuals, and four others felt that a combination of at least two of these ideas was most helpful.

Although one hour was mentioned most often as the amount of time that should be spent in teaching reading comprehension during the school day, the time varied from twenty minutes to practically all the school day. Several teachers felt that the time would vary somewhat according to the general achievement level of the class.

The largest number of teachers listed one-half of the formal reading period as the approximate amount of time set aside for teaching reading comprehension. The range was from one-third of the period to almost all of it.

Using material of varying subject matter and graduated reading difficulty, and ability grouping were the two most widely used ways of providing for individual differences. Several innovations to these methods included: having ability reading clubs, groups with common skill weaknesses, individual help from the teacher or from other students, and extra work for capable students.

Limited meaning vocabulary was listed as the biggest problem in both oral and silent reading comprehension. Suggested methods of attacking this problem included having the child make individual books of difficult words, having advanced students give many meanings, using dictionaries, and having frequent contests involving a review of word meanings.

Other problems evidenced frequently in poor silent-reading comprehension included lack of interest, limited

practice in reading for various purposes, lack of proper training, too difficult reading material, and mental incapability. Other big problems observed in poor oral-reading comprehension were stress on pronunciation and expression, rather than on meaning; lack of interest; mental inability; and limited eye-voice span.

The teachers interviewed disagreed somewhat on what phases of comprehension should be taught at the fifth, sixth, and seventh grade levels. All the teachers, however, felt that the children should be taught reading for problem solving. More than ninety per cent of the teachers felt that each of the following types of comprehension should be taught: reading to follow directions, reading to gather and organize materials, reading to get the main thought: skimming, reading to interpret, and reading to remember details. Between fifty and seventy-five per cent of the teachers felt that reading to predict outcomes, reading to test the truthfulness of a passage, and reading to make inferences should be taught. A little less than one-half felt that reading to sense the emotional overtones of the author should be presented, and less than one-third felt that reading to detect irony should be introduced at this level.

The more common methods used in teaching reading for problem-solving included: giving definite steps to follow in solving verbal problems in arithmetic, using reference

material, using direct questioning and step-by-step questioning in social studies, testing, and using team games. Reading to follow directions was more often taught by the following methods: having the children follow simple class directions without help, doing think-and-do exercises in many subjects, giving oral explanations of harder directions before the work was started, having the children project themselves into the characters set up in artificial problem situations, and having the pupils follow well-formulated test directions alone.

A rather large number of methods were enumerated for teaching reading to gather and organize materials, but the more usual ones were; making individual or large-group outlines, using reference materials, doing oral and written reports, making collections of social studies information, writing summaries, working on units, preparing committee reports, and dramatizing material read. Reading to get the main thought was taught by having direct questioning, suggesting guide questions prior to the reading, using written exercises of various types, giving oral exercises or instructions, finding topic sentences and main topics, and doing pleasure-reading followed by reports.

Among the ways of teaching reading to interpret were oral discussion, written exercises, direct questioning, oral reading, dramatization, and conversation with individuals.

Reading to remember details was more commonly taught through direct questioning, but other prevalent methods included the use of oral and written tests, oral discussion, outlining, and written questions or exercises.

The most frequently used methods for teaching reading to predict outcomes included: stopping the story before it was finished, and guessing the outcome orally; writing the outcome of stories partially read; predicting the outcomes of stories being read to the class; and having students estimate the influence of the past on history that is now being made. Using reference materials and asking children to discriminate orally between fact and opinion were used widely for teaching reading to test the truthfulness of a passage.

Usual ways of teaching reading to make inferences were: using direct thought questions, pointing out certain passages and discussing them orally, and getting the word meanings from the context clues. Reading to sense the emotional overtones of the author were often taught through the use of oral reading and discussion, direct questioning, and background reading and discussion prior to the reading of a selection. The teachers who taught reading to detect irony found the following methods most successful: pointing out and discussing such passages, or having advanced students discover and interpret such passages on their own. Other types of compre-

hension taught and the methods used may be found in Table IV, pages 32-36.

People and Progress was mentioned twelve times as a good book for teaching reading comprehension. Days and Deeds was listed seven times, and Bright Peaks and Stories to Remember were listed five times each. Seventy other books were mentioned, many by just one teacher. My Weekly Reader and Junior Scholastic were mentioned five and three times each, respectively, and no other periodicals were mentioned more than once. Of the workbook-type material suggested, Reader's Digest Skill Builders were mentioned five times, and The Think and Do Books of Scott, Foresman and Company, four times. Seven aids of various types were listed, but only one time each.

II. CONCLUSIONS

In the opinion of the writer, this study has strengthened the idea that many reading comprehension skills can be taught through direct teaching, and that a number of fifth, sixth, and seventh grade teachers are making a conscious effort to instruct their pupils in these skills. Since more than half of the teachers interviewed felt that reading for problem-solving, reading to follow directions, reading to gather and organize materials, reading to get the main thought or skimming, reading to interpret, reading to remem-

ber details, reading to predict outcomes, reading to test the truthfulness of a passage, and reading to make inferences should be taught at or by these grade levels, it would seem that these skills should definitely be a part of the curriculum. Other less frequently mentioned skills, such as reading to sense the emotional overtones of the author and reading to detect irony, might be taught if the teacher felt the maturity level of the pupils and the achievement status of the class as a whole justified such training.

The teachers interviewed had found a variety of methods helpful in teaching the various phases of comprehension. While the more frequently mentioned methods have perhaps been more widely known and used, it might prove interesting and valuable to try a number of the less widely practiced methods. This study indicated, further, that several methods, such as direct questioning and outlining, could be varied for use in teaching a number of comprehension skills.

Since the teachers were almost exactly divided in opinion between more frequent use of whole-group instruction, and ability grouping for reading comprehension, the writer would suggest that either is acceptable, and the teacher should choose the way of dividing the class according to the ability of the class and the purpose of the instruction. A combination of these two might prove useful. Individual

instruction was not recommended for the greater part of the school day, since large or middle sized classes make this impractical.

The study further revealed the need for about one hour's instruction, divided among several subjects, in comprehension skills during the school day. Up to one-half of the reading period should be spent in teaching such skills. The writer would suggest that this instruction be carefully planned for, rather than depending on classroom situations to arise in which such a program of instruction would be necessary. Helping the children to see these skills as a part of all their reading, rather than only a part of formal reading instruction, is important.

The fact that limited meaning vocabulary was listed as the biggest problem in oral and in silent reading indicated that not enough time is being spent in teaching the children to gather the full meanings of words. Besides the ways of attacking this situation mentioned earlier in this study, the writer would suggest that teachers order the free materials on the use of dictionaries from the three publishers of the outstanding elementary dictionaries: Webster's Elementary School Dictionary (American Book Company), Thorndike Junior Dictionary (Scott, Foresman and Company), and Winston's Dictionary for School (John C. Winston Company). Such materials make the use of the dictionary more interest-

ing and, therefore, more useful to the child in building word concepts. Making illustrated charts of homonyms, antonyms, and synonyms has also proved helpful to children, as has writing stories using new words encountered in a reading story or a spelling list.

Providing for individual differences is also important in teaching reading comprehension. In order to do this, the teacher must know his children's backgrounds, their interests, and their weaknesses. Besides the ways of meeting individual needs already listed, it is important at times merely to change the seating arrangement, so that isolates will be brought into the group. The use of sociograms has been found helpful in detecting such cases, and this arrangement sometimes gives the child the confidence to succeed in reading comprehension. To see the teacher browsing through a certain book during a library period sometimes gives a reluctant reader the needed motive for reading a book that will increase his interest and skill in books. It is indeed helpful for the teacher to accept each child as he is, and to work to help him improve his present condition.

III. RECOMMENDATIONS

Since limited meaning vocabulary seems to be one of the biggest causes of or factors behind poor comprehension,

the writer suggests a further study involving the increasing of the meaning vocabularies of upper elementary or junior high school children.

A further study of individual differences and ways of providing for the needs of each child in reading would be helpful.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Check-List on Reading Comprehension Methods

Do you attempt to do direct teaching of reading comprehension? Yes____; No____.

I. If the answer is "yes," indicate the types of comprehension you have attempted to teach in the sixth grade, and the method or methods you have found most useful for each type.

1. Reading to get the main thought: skimming. Yes____; No__. Method(s) used:_____.

2. Reading to remember details. Yes____; No____. Method(s) used:_____.

3. Reading to follow directions. Yes____; No____. Method(s) used:_____.

4. Reading to make inferences. Yes____; No____. Method(s) used:_____.

5. Reading to sense the emotional overtones of the author. Yes____; No____. Method(s) used:_____.

6. Reading to detect irony. Yes____; No____. Method(s) used: _____.

7. Reading for problem-solving. Yes____; No____. Method(s) used:_____.

8. Reading to interpret. Yes____; No____. Method(s) used: _____.

9. Reading to test the truthfulness of a passage. Yes____; No____. Method(s) used:_____.

10. Reading to predict outcomes. Yes____; No____. Method(s) used:_____.

11. Reading to gather and organize materials. Yes____; No____. Method(s) used:_____.

12. Other types taught (Please indicate methods used):

II. Please indicate the methods you use to determine the overall quality of a child's reading comprehension.
1. Oral reading. Yes____; No____.
2. Workbooks. Yes____; No____.
3. Teacher-Prepared Written Tests. Yes____; No____.
4. Standardized Tests (Other than Achievement). Yes__; No__.
5. Teacher-Prepared Oral Tests. Yes____; No____.
6. Others:

III. Please indicate the chief situation in which you teach comprehension.
1. To the class as a whole_____.
2. To ability groups._____.
3. To individuals.____.

IV. Please indicate by 1,2, and 3 which three factors, in order, you consider to be most prevalent in poor silent-reading comprehension.
____ 1. Poor vision.
____ 2. Lack of interest.
____ 3. Carelessness.
____ 4. Narrow experience range.
____ 5. Limited meaning vocabulary.
____ 6. Too much stress on speed.
____ 7. Mental incapability.
____ 8. Congenital word blindness.
____ 9. Poor eye movement habits.
____ 10. Lack of proper training.
____ 11. Lack of thought unit reading.
____ 12. Inappropriate rate of reading for that type material.
____ 13. Not enough practice in reading for various purposes.
____ 14. Too difficult reading material.

V. Indicate by 1,2, and 3 which three factors, in order, you consider to be most prevalent in poor oral-reading comprehension.
____ 1. Poor vision.
____ 2. Lack of interest.
____ 3. Poor meaning vocabulary.
____ 4. Mental inability.
____ 5. Congenital word blindness.
____ 6. Stress on pronunciation and expression, rather than on meaning.
____ 7. Faulty breathing habits.
____ 8. Limited eye-voice span.

VI. Please list the names of textbooks (with authors), stories, and other aids that you consider particularly good for teaching comprehension at the sixth grade level.

VII. About how much time do you feel should be spent on teaching reading comprehension during the school day?

About what part of the reading period do you feel should be given over to the teaching of reading comprehension?

VIII. How do you provide for individual differences in the teaching of reading comprehension?

APPENDIX B

SUGGESTED LIST OF BOOKS FOR TEACHERS

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