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Reading while listening: Adult literacy students

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READING WHILE LISTENING:

ADULT LITERACY STUDENTS

by

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This dissertation explores the use of the tape recorder
with five adult reading students. It was postulated that
independent practice with reading materials supported by
the same materials on tapes would utilize or develop the
intrinsic learning capacities of the adults, retain their
need for autonomy and free them to utilize the innate
language learning skills they already had used to learn to
speak. The multiple inputs of the tape-book combination,
along with a pointing finger, would aid concentration. The
use of continuous text would allow students to work on
syntax, semantics and phonology simultaneously or as appro-
priate. In addition, self-observation was emphasized so
that adults would both recognize and communicate their
learning techniques.

Five reading students received tutoring an hour a day,
four times a week, whenever they were present during the
fourteen week study. This tutoring emphasized the use of
the tape recorder, but also employed other teaching methods.
This was in addition to the work students did in their
adult basic education classrooms during their in-school
time, which was primarily a Laubach-phonic approach.

It was found that tape recorders can be used in a wide
variety of ways with diverse materials, individualizing the
work to specific student needs and abilities. While

students recognized the support and independence benefits the recorded work provided, differences in application and methodology made it difficult to measure or credit the use of tapes with direct improvement in reading for four of the five students. Two did not choose to use the tapes as directed. A combination of methods was used with one student, making it difficult to determine the causes of his gains. A fourth was unable to use taped materials unsupervised, as she was on a beginning level of abilities. The fifth student made strong gains in reading ability and in self-confidence after five years of negligible progress. In addition, considerable insight was gained into the strategies used by this quite verbal student to teach himself to read.

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The encouragement of my children and of many friends has been invaluable in bringing this undertaking to completion. My husband, Wilford, has been the most patient of all. Now we can go on with our lives together.

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PILOT STUDY

My initial experiences with reading while listening were positive, perhaps because they were with two very special people. Cynthia and Michael gave me some insights into the concept of reading while listening and confidence that it has much to offer adult literacy students. I submit these accounts as a Pilot Study.

Cynthia

My interest in reading while listening began in the fall of 1981 when I tutored a charming woman named Cynthia who had dropped out of school at age 15. She had become pregnant while still in the seventh grade. After a marriage that has lasted 39 years this woman was determined to learn to read and came to the community college, where she enrolled in the Adult Basic Education Program.

The second time I met with Cynthia I came prepared with a little book by James Weldon Johnson and his brother J. Rosamond Johnson (1970) entitled Lift Every Voice and Sing. I had brought a tape recorder and a tape with me, intending to use an adaptation of Heckleman's Neurological Impress Method (1966). I read the story about the Johnson brothers from the flyleaf to Cynthia and asked her if she knew any

of the words. After she had pointed out those she knew, I
read the story again. I then asked Cynthia to try to read
along with me the third time I read it. We worked on a
paragraph at a time, and soon she was reading much of the
material without my help.

For a homework assignment I asked Cynthia to practice
reading the Johnson brothers' (1970) Lift Every Voice and
Sing, which is sometimes called the "Black National Anthem."
I had put the words on a tape for her to take home.

When I arrived the following Thursday I was amazed to
hear Cynthia singing Lift Every Voice and Sing to one of
her fellow students. The book had the music as well as the
words printed in it. She had gone to her choir director,
showed her the song, and asked her to play it. They then
tape-recorded the music and Cynthia learned to sing the
song as well as to read it.

My other experiences with Cynthia were just as stimu-
lating. Whatever assignment I gave her she always worked
on at home and did a beautiful job reading the material the
next session. We usually studied the words Cynthia thought
would be hard for her to learn before she took the assign-
ment home. Little lessons in finding similarities in words
often presented themselves, and Cynthia learned to look for
these similarities. I felt that Cynthia had progressed from

a "low third grade" reading level to about a "sixth grade"
level in the months between October and May.

Reading while listening requires a lot of independent
work. A particularly amusing story about Cynthia is the
one she told of the Saturday evening her husband sent her
out to McDonald's to get their supper. She enjoyed this
treat, and then decided to work on her reading, but she
could not find her books. She had angry thoughts about her
son moving them after he had been specifically told never
to touch them. Suddenly she noticed her husband laughing
at her instead of sympathizing. She was about to say some-
thing irritable to him, too, when he said: "You're not
going to read again tonight. I hid your books and you're
going to spend some time with me for a change." She had
neglected him for her books and he was expressing his
jealousy!

Cynthia had to stop her lessons in the spring because
she had been having headaches and her eyes hurt a great
deal. Later in the summer I heard that she had had surgery
on her brain for a growth that was threatening her life.

She got in touch with me in the fall and tried again to
work on her reading, but after two sessions gave up. It was
too difficult for her. She had all she could do to go to
work and back home to rest at the end of each day. But

before we parted she had me put part of the Responsive Readings which are in the back of the Methodist Hymnal (1964) onto tape so that she could practice them. She was determined that she would one day volunteer to lead the reading in her church if she had the opportunity. I sent her the rest of the Responsive Readings on tape soon thereafter.

Two years later I ran into Cynthia again. She was enrolled in the community college and had resumed her studies. She had begun looking forward to taking the test for her General Education Diploma.

Michael

Michael's story gives a deeper insight into reading while listening at work. When I met him in August, 1982, Michael was 26 years old. He has a high school diploma which he had received "because I was good at sports and I didn't cause any trouble, so they just kept pushing me through." Michael told me he had stuttered when he was younger, but had "just learned to go slower." His slow, careful speech gives the impression that Michael is a very relaxed person.

When I asked Michael to read a paragraph in Sterling North's Rascal (1964), he showed very little knowledge of even the most basic words and little word attack ability.

I later found that he could do somewhat better after he had learned he could trust me. My guess would be that he read at a "low second grade" level when we started to work together.

In November I felt we had established a good enough relationship to attempt to give him a Gray Oral Reading Test (1967). With great patience on my part and breaking the standardization rules by forgetting about time limits and giving much encouragement, Michael succeeded in reading the third-grade-level passage well enough to show 80% comprehension. Yet I felt that this test did not convey any valid information and that Michael could have done better if it had not been a "test." I had similar results when I tried to give him a Slosson I.Q. test (Slosson, 1963). He worked on it over two sessions, again breaking standardization procedures, working incredibly hard, but I finally stopped him before we reached the cut-off criterion. His tensions were interfering with his performance. At that point his score gave him a possible I.Q. of about 98. My two months' experience with Michael convinced me that this score was not representative of his true ability. I believed he had above average intelligence. I based this on his quick comprehension of oral language and also on the fact that the Slosson is not normed on a Southern black population.

Tutoring sessions consisted primarily of reading while listening supplemented with word attack skill drill. I assisted Michael with words that might cause trouble due to lack of familiarity or number of syllables. We spent time on words with similar parts, such as <u>anim-al</u> and <u>practic-al</u>. Throughout I tried to learn more about Michael's reading strengths and frequently asked him how he had remembered certain words.

At first we used the sports pages of the newspaper for material. On November 24th, 1982 Michael reread an article for me we had not worked on together for a month. It was minimally "eighth grade" reading level. His errors consisted of <u>a</u> for <u>the</u>, omission of <u>'s</u> and <u>-ing</u> on the ends of words and one miscue using a synonym--all acceptable errors. When I asked Michael how he had done so well he said when he came to a difficult word on the tape he listened harder. On January 24th I asked him to read the same article. He read with 95% accuracy. I asked him how he had remembered <u>probation</u>. He said: "I saw <u>pro</u> - <u>ba</u> - <u>tion</u>."

Michael mentioned that he has several albums of songs with the words to the songs on the album cover and asked if they would do for reading while listening. The next time he came he brought some albums and sang for me. I then had him read the words. He was much surer of himself singing

than reading, but I felt he was reading and not just saying words he had memorized.

We discussed reading unfamiliar words by using the context. I used some examples of words alone, which he could not read until he saw or heard the context around them. (This is very much like the cloze technique, in which a word is left out of a sentence and the student is encouraged to supply the most likely word.) Michael used initial consonants plus any familiar word parts to work out words--e.g., <u>pre</u> - <u>ten</u> - <u>sion</u> plus context.

Michael read about 1,500 words from Steinbeck's <u>The Red Pony</u> (1945) with 98% accuracy on March 2nd after preparing it at home. There was still hesitancy in his reading, so that he did not sound comfortable. It appeared that he was being very hard on himself and feared making a mistake. The mistakes he did make made sense--<u>unfastened</u> instead of <u>unbuckled</u>. The third time he made the same mistake, I said: "<u>Look</u> at the word!" He said: "Oh, unbuckled." He <u>was</u> reading! His correction was accomplished with nervous laughter.

As we prepared the next section, I underlined the words I thought Michael might have difficulty with. There were only about 4 or 5 to the page--<u>conceal</u>, <u>ridge</u>, <u>partridge</u>. I particularly made sure he knew their meanings. I picked

out a new section of <u>The Red Pony</u>, read it once, and had
Michael read. In the first section he had difficulty with
two words--one was <u>obscure</u>. Later he said <u>then</u> for <u>when</u>.
I asked why. He said he sometimes wasn't sure of the <u>w</u>
sound. I wrote <u>wind</u> and told him to think of the wind
blowing, making a <u>w</u> sound. He liked these examples, but
somehow I did not think he would remember them. He blocked
on phonics, and I knew it. His reading, with one rehearsal,
was between 90% and 95%.

On March 27th, 1983, a Saturday, Michael invited him-
self for lunch to tell me what was going on in his life.
Our sessions were becoming fewer and further between.
Michael had been working two jobs. He said he and another
man were planning to buy a mail trucking contract. I
surely understood that Michael had to upgrade his standard
of living in every way he could and encouraged him to go
ahead. His interest in learning to read took a back seat,
as his time was too full.

That August Michael came to visit and to fish in the
lake behind our house. We had a long talk about reading
while listening. He said he had enjoyed it and believed he
could understand the material better when he could run the
tape back to difficult parts. He had learned to center his
attention on meaning more closely. He believed he

remembered the difficult words by focusing on them and was absolutely certain that he would recognize words he had met in our work together in other contexts. He clearly felt materials should relate to students' lives and interests and that he could infer meaning better on such material from experience. He had enjoyed <u>The Red Pony</u> but thought it was too long.

Whether other students would be as verbal about their reactions remained to be seen. Our good relationship abetted this quality of insight.

CHAPTER I

THE PROBLEM

"There's only one way to learn to read and that's by reading." This statement was made to me by my sister Charlotte, whose knowledge and experience came primarily from having raised four very fine children in a house whose outstanding feature was a room with two walls of bookcases filled with books of all types. Little did she know that she was quoting the noted psycholinguist Frank Smith, who has said over and over again in various ways: "We learn to read by reading" (1973, p. 195; 1975a, p. 186; 1975b, p. 358; 1983, p. 5, 26, 35; 1985, p. xii).

Rationale

While it is accepted that we learn to speak by exposure to people who talk, reading specialists believe learning to read can be accomplished similarly, by exposure to text. Russell G. Stauffer (1969) has said, "Children can learn to read much as they learned to talk" (p. xvi; Moffett & Wagner, 1976; F. Smith, 1986). Many of the problems involved in learning to read are probably no more compli-cated than those encountered in learning to speak (Fishbein & Emans, 1972; Pflaum, 1978; F. Smith, 1986). Despite

differences, the majority of the challenges in these two areas overlap (Fries, 1962).

Yet a bridge must be crossed between listening and speaking, the primary linguistic activities, and reading, a secondary linguistic activity. An important part of this bridge is the use of syntax, which connects words or surface structure to inner experience or deep structure, culminating in understanding of meaning. Its foundation must be strongly built before much progress in reading can be hoped for (F. Smith, 1971, 1975b). This bridge is deemphasized in some literacy instruction, particularly that using a primarily phonic approach. Adult reading students need to strengthen all aspects of the reading process, not just their word attack skills.

A way this can be accomplished is by exposure to continuous text while listening to materials which have been tape-recorded. It seems reasonable to describe this as "reading while listening," or R-W-L. Considered broadly, this can be any simultaneous exposure to print and spoken text. It integrates the three learning modalities of hearing, sight, and sometimes touch. Their concurrent use is believed to help concentration and comprehension (Heckleman, 1966; Jordan, 1971).

The most salient feature of reading while listening is that it permits students to utilize their innate language skills and design their own individualized avenues for learning to read at their own pace. This intrinsic, generative approach not only resembles the method used in learning oral language but also that which early readers and self-taught readers appear to have used for generations. It has been utilized as a remedial method and is neither complex nor new.

Learning to read involves a delicate, individualized balance of enlarging sentence structure, or syntax, and enriching vocabulary, or the semantic groundwork, together with word analysis. It both broadens prior experience and connects it with new materials that are interesting and challenging in content. Most of reading is not even done with the eyes but with the mind, and the print on a page is a very small part of the reading process. The eyes transmit visual impulses to the brain, which interprets them and reacts to them.

> Such interpretation and reaction may be instantaneous or halting, accurate or erroneous, easy or full of effort, dependent not on the sharpness of a reader's vision but on the clearness and richness of his understanding, and on the reflexive perception habits under which he operates. (Lewis, 1958, p. 51)

Smith (1975b) tells us that the ability to form words has little to do with the process of reading. The major

purpose of reading is to seek information. Reading while listening maximizes the information-seeking goal of the reader by making the information readily available. Assuming most of the material is understood, the major goal is now accessible aurally. Repetition also helps comprehension by allowing greater concentration on content. The mind and the eye are freed to use whatever clues are upon the page or within the text to enable the student to comprehend and remember the text more easily. Perception habits are progressively built in increments finely tuned to individualized needs and abilities of the moment, be it at the level of syntax, semantics, phonics or deeper lying discoveries in a manner similar to that used when the student first learned to speak without guidance from any teacher, or through intrinsic learning.

Reading while listening should not be handing a tape and a text to a student and saying "Come back when you can read this!" While it provides opportunity for independent practice and encourages autonomy on the part of the student, it concomitantly requires strong teacher or tutor involvement to help focus and guide student attention to recognize how he or she can learn to read. Reading while listening necessitates ongoing sensitivity to student strengths as well as perceptiveness of and accommodation to a variety of

sometimes very real deficits. High flexibility and careful
responsiveness are essentials.

The most important component of R-W-L is that the
students' sense of independence is respected. It is often
the student who, by asking the right questions or in
response to questioning, points out his or her difficulties.
These are then worked on together in whatever manner is most
suitable to that particular student and problem. Student
verbalization of learning methods aids student and teacher
in an understanding of the individualized learning process.
It is ultimately the student who decides how to learn the
material and whether or not he or she has enough skills to
handle it. The student also helps make decisions in such
areas as choosing materials, deciding how large an assign-
ment can be managed, and whether work will be done in the
classroom or at home in free time when it is appropriate.
The work is truly student-centered, not teacher-, curriculum-
or rule-centered. Ideally, the teacher is principally a
facilitator.

Purpose

The use of reading while listening with adult literacy
students is explored in this dissertation. Some questions
about R-W-L arise which may be answered in the process of

working with students at various levels of ability. A few of the more obvious questions follow:

1. When should or should not R-W-L be used in teaching reading to adults? Does it meet the needs of some students better than others, or does it help all literacy students?

2. Can R-W-L be individualized to meet students' needs? In what ways can it be adapted to meet the varying abilities of each student?

3. How can R-W-L be integrated into the curriculum? Does it adapt to various teaching methods and materials?

4. What are students' short term and long term attitudes toward the use of R-W-L? Is it universally accepted, or will some students use it more than others?

5. How can one assess the use of R-W-L?

6. Is R-W-L effective as a method of teaching reading to adults? Does its use bear out the theory of a whole word approach to reading?

7. What are the advantages of using R-W-L?

8. Are there any risks in using R-W-L?

Some of the background of work in adult literacy will be outlined and a profile of adult illiterates, highlighting some of their outstanding characteristics, will follow. The Review of Literature will first discuss the theory behind reading while listening and will continue with examples of

various studies and theories utilizing R-W-L. After
setting forth how this study was carried out the work done
with the students in this study will be summarized, with
examples of their work. The results of the study will then
be discussed in relation to the preceding questions and
some suggestions for further research will conclude this
study.

Adult Literacy

While the field of adult literacy education is an old
one the literature has, until recently, been sparse and
essentially unsubstantial (Cranney, 1983a, 1983b). Almost
all work with illiterate adults was done by volunteer
groups, usually on a one-to-one basis.

Upon passage of the Economic Opportunity Act of 1964
the Federal Adult Basic Education (A.B.E.) program was
initiated. The adult education portion of the Economic
Opportunity Act was amended in 1966, 1978 and 1981, and is
now known as the Adult Education Act, P.L. 91-230. The
A.B.E. program was placed under the aegis of the Department
of Health, Education, and Welfare in 1966 through the
Secondary Education Act. Various co-sponsorship arrange-
ments of A.B.E. programs are common within each of the
states with community colleges, businesses, churches,
custodial institutions, and other groups.

With this increase in attention to adult literacy new teaching methods are beginning to emerge. Individualized approaches, tailored to students' specific needs, appear to work the best and tutoring is still recommended as the teaching method of choice, despite the fact that some A.B.E. classes have 30 or more students. Teaching materials are beginning to proliferate also, providing a pool of easier resources for independent reading, usually at more mature interest levels. However, the content of some materials is still babyish and not very pertinent to students' lives. Research, while budding, is still in a beginning stage (Boshier & Pickard, 1979; Cranney, 1983b). L. Johnson (1980) stated, "To date . . . developmental and advanced adult readers in our country have been neglected" (p. vii).

It is no accident that the field of adult literacy was all but ignored until recently. Attitudes toward illiterate persons have undergone considerable changes in recent years, similar to the more accepting changes required before help was provided for learning-disabled children. The public increasingly realizes that illiteracy hurts not only the nonreading adult, but is costly to society itself. Action to eradicate illiteracy is relevant to many areas of life-- unemployment, poverty, crime and mental illness--as well as future generations who will likely follow in their parents' footsteps.

Inconsistent criteria are used to define illiteracy.
Consequently, there is wide discrepancy in the figures
given for numbers of illiterate people in the United States.
They range from a low estimate of 1%, based on the number
of persons in the United States census of 1969 who were
over 15 years of age and had completed less than six years
of schooling (Jones, 1981; Pattison, 1982), to as high as
42% in certain areas of the United States (Hunter & Harman,
1979). Yet only 2% to 4% of the total eligible literacy
population is reached by Adult Basic Education classes
(Hunter & Harman, 1979). Furthermore, Harman (1970) stated
that roughly 25% of enrollees in A.B.E. classes drop out
each semester, reducing the effectiveness of the above
percentages by yet another fourth. In some areas 50%
dropped out. Kozol (1985) put the drop-out figure at 40%,
and Meyer (1983, personal correspondence) at 40-60% in her
study, which matches my own observations. A mere $1.65 per
illiterate adult in the United States is budgeted each year
by the federal government (Kozol, 1985). When the small
percentage that attempts to work on reading each year is
considered this comes to $46.00 per student (U.S. Depart-
ment of Education, 1983).

It is no wonder that Kavale and Lindsey (1977), 13
years after the A.B.E. program originated, said that "the

literature contains few research studies generating new knowledge about the nature of the illiterates' reading process" (p. 368), and "the A.B.E. movement has made little progress in achieving its aim of promoting adult literacy" (p. 368). Six years later Lindsey and Jarman (1984) reported further progress was being made but called for redesigning programs to meet the needs of the people in their communities and for more research.

Another deterrent to progress has been the lack of educational guidelines for working with adult students. While research in elementary education has swelled in the past 50 years, there were few incentives to work with adult reading students until the passage of the aforementioned Economic Opportunity and Adult Education Acts of 1964 and 1966, as amended (Kavale & Lindsey, 1977). The bulk of literacy education is still done with volunteers or with minimally trained teachers or tutors. Most of those who teach Adult Basic Education in community colleges are paid on a part-time, hourly basis. Very few have degrees either in adult education or in reading, except those who have been teachers of elementary school reading. The International Reading Association found that only 25% of the states were working to develop minimum standards for A.B.E. teachers of reading in 1978 (International Reading Association, 1980).

When the I.R.A. survey was made, only 36% of states said A.B.E. teachers had taken college coursework in reading, but 96% did offer staff development in reading for A.B.E. teachers. "Teachers of adults are believed to be marginally trained, enduring the low esteem of colleagues, and out of the mainstream of academic education" (Cranney, 1983b, p. 416). This situation is very gradually improving. College courses in adult reading are multiplying. Cranney (1983b) reported that in 1982 there were four universities which offered a degree program specifically in adult reading. This is surely a germinal time for the workers in the forefront of adult reading education!

Adult Literacy Students

To work with adult literacy students is an enormous and frequently gratifying challenge. Their history of failure makes it all the more important to understand them and to relate to them as adults if their reading is to improve. Lamorella, Tracy, Haase and Murphy (1983) have researched some of the characteristics of adult basic education students. The following summarizes some of their findings:

> 1. Adults learn more slowly than young people--but more accurately. They are more sensitive to unfavorable criticism and have more need to see progress in their learning. Effects of aging, such as weakened

eyesight and hearing, can make it more difficult for them to learn. Adults' ingrained habits and attitudes may inhibit their learning, but they may learn more quickly if instruction is based on their past experiences. Adults expect to be treated with dignity rather than being patronized. (p. 89)

2. Functionally illiterate adults usually have gaps in their learning beyond their inability to read. Many have attended school only intermittently. Others worked only on subjects which interested them during their years in school. Still others experienced failure early and learned only when risk of failure was minimal. (p. 89)

3. Each adult requires an individualized reading program which will enable her/him to be responsible for her/his progress and to select materials s/he finds interesting. Group exercises can be used as an interlude in the routine of individualized learning and can contribute significantly to such activities as word recognition and map reading. (p. 90)

4. The characteristics that separate them from literate adults are their fear of schooling, their apparent inability to learn to read, and their inability to learn from print. Most have not been successful, and experience anxiety in classrooms. (p. 90)

5. The instructor should be aware that adults will act as students and may become dependent on the instructor. Some will bait the instructor, others will feign knowledge for fear of appearing stupid, and still others will never do what is required for success in learning. Adults will come when it is convenient and if they believe they are making progress. If they feel frustration or failure, they will seldom tell anyone, but will simply drop out of the program. (p. 90)

Literacy students have individualized learning styles which must be discovered. Thistlethwaite (1983) describes some literacy students as field-independent or self-directed and others as field-dependent. A part of a

literacy instructor's task, then, is to help learners become self-directing. Sharing in diagnosis, in the setting of goals and the planning of learning activities as well as in evaluation is a means to this end. In particular, says Thistlethwaite (1983), "the presence of a goal greatly increases the chance of success" (p. 26). Knowles (1978) lists lack of established goals as one of the obstacles to self-direction.

Many literacy students have adopted an attitude of "learned helplessness" toward reading. They have failed so often that it is difficult to convince them that they and only they can teach themselves to read and that they already have all the necessary skills. They have effectively erected a barrier between themselves and reading, attributing lack of ability as a cause. However, in studies by Butkowsky and Willows (1980) and by Seligman, Maier, and Geer (1968), when causal attributions of success and failure were altered, students were more able to accept responsibility for their own learning. It is theorized that, inasmuch as R-W-L has the potential to be a failsafe method of learning, the problem of learned helplessness will be dealt with when the student becomes convinced that he or she does have the ability to learn to read and can attribute previous failure to other causes.

Chapin and Dyck (1976) mentioned an experiment in which it was found that in an errorless or "success" approach to learning it is important to be aware that removal of the success training method can lead to disruption in performance. The fragile egos of literacy students must be protected from this as much as is possible. A way of preventing this, it is hypothesized, is that students be encouraged not merely to memorize the material they work with, but consciously to observe what processes they are using to ingrain the materials into their memories. It is for this reason that emphasis in this study will be, as much as possible, on metacognition, or observance by the students of how they learn.

While literacy students express a very strong desire to learn to read, reading is such a frustrating activity for most of them that they have avoided it at all costs for most of their lives. The reading skills they do have are uniquely individualized. They may confuse the words on and no, the and and, home and house, yet be able to read seemingly more difficult words, such as McDonald's, Gentlemen, or Employment. This is in accordance with Buchanan and Sherman's (1981) findings that most adults do not learn in a structured continuum nor do they develop skills in a predictable hierarchy.

An important stumbling block for many literacy students
is a mismatch between their vocabulary and syntax and that
of most reading materials (Goodman & Buck, 1973; Hoffman,
1980; F. Smith, 1975a). While they may have had wide
experiences in living their daily lives, the subject matter
of most texts is foreign to their interests and lifestyles
and they have difficulty comprehending it. Further, most
nonreaders are usually exposed only to the simple language
structure of everyday speech and they are thus deprived of
familiarity with much of the richness of the language of
literature that could broaden their language development.
Often the easiest of texts has more complicated syntax than
their speech (Krail, 1967; Pflaum, 1978; Strickland, 1973).

> Unless the strongest possible motivation is present
> and unless [the literacy student] can be furnished
> with materials that are written specifically for his
> group, it is little wonder that he will remain a
> retarded reader. (Krail, 1967, p. 96)

This explains why the language experience approach has fre-
quently been found appropriate and successful with literacy
students (Jones, 1981; Lindsey & Jarman, 1984; Schneiderman,
1977; Stauffer, 1970). The familiar language and the con-
tinuous text provide the cues beginning readers need for
secure attempts at comprehending the reading process.

It is no coincidence that in 1982 Malicky and Norman
found that high-progress adult readers used syntactic cues

more often than did low-progress readers. They predicted that shifting from using phonics to using syntactic cues was a prerequisite for achievement for the low-progress readers. Cox (1976) also found that the A.B.E. students had difficulty with the structure of written language. Cooper and Petrosky (1976) pointed out that these syntactic rules operate below the level of conscious awareness. N. Chomsky (1965) and F. Smith (1975b) also supported the need for syntactic growth as a forerunner of learning to read.

The foregoing is not, however, meant as a bid to emphasize the teaching of syntax. DeFord (1981), in interpreting K. Goodman (1974) said:

> If we taught oral language the way we do reading we would have as many students enrolled in remedial language classes as we do in remedial reading classes. The fact that children learn language through concrete experiences, in functional, ongoing language settings, is a powerful instructional imperative that must also be utilized within the classroom. (DeFord, 1981, p. 653)

The basic rules of grammar are already known. They need only be transferred to the new medium. The greater complexity of written language is learned gradually by immersion, as is all language. It is through the receptive skills of both listening and reading that students become aware of the possibilities in communication, and exposure and awareness accomplish more than drill (Judy & Judy, 1979).

Reading while listening provides the exposure to syntax often lacking in mediated reading instruction. Since comprehension comes well before production in all areas of the language arts, we may expect adults to comprehend material of higher complexity than they are able to produce. When the reading material is more complicated than that usually met in daily life, the student draws into receptive reserves to find meaning. The repetition inherent in R-W-L would facilitate this.

Too sudden an increase in complexity of syntax can become a problem. Mismatch of syntax, semantics, or phonology in text can be a critical blow to the self-concepts of students, as one's language is a very basic part of a human being (K. Goodman, 1969). This may explain why we often find that self-concepts-as-learners are low and anxiety so high that adult literacy students are frequently not sure that they know anything at all about reading, leaving them vulnerable to sudden impulsive errors (Bowren & Zintz, 1977; Purkey, 1978; Richek, List & Werner, 1983; F. Smith, 1973, 1975b; J. Smith, 1972).

The literature on using reading while listening with adults is scarce. The following review of the literature must, therefore, necessarily discuss primarily work with children except for the small amount that has been written

about its use with adults. The bulk of the literature is positive. This general advantage of using R-W-L may be an indication that we have been doing something wrong with all reading students unless we incorporate it into every reading program.

CHAPTER II

A REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Theoretical Background

The theoretical background will help to clarify why reading while listening may be a natural approach to the teaching of reading. Starting first with the beginnings of language, a connection will be made between listening and reading. A discussion of why a phonic approach may make it difficult for some students to learn to read follows. A brief sketch of the circumstances which appear to encourage early or self-taught reading concludes this section of the review.

Language and Reading

Learning to speak is a self-motivated, self-directed, creative activity. Hoskisson (1979b) described this well when he said, "A child is a language constructionist" (p. 489). Goodman and Goodman (1976) submitted that learning to read is a natural process which a literate society accomplishes "in a similar fashion as oral/aural language" and that "acquisition of literacy is an extension of natural language learning for all children" (pp. 455-456). Many of the skills children use to learn spoken language

can be applied to the learning to read process (Goodman &
Goodman, 1976; Guthrie & Tyler, 1976; Hoskisson, 1979b;
Huey, 1908; Mattingly, 1972; Meyer, 1980, 1982; F. Smith,
1975a, 1975b). The need to communicate is the catalyst
which makes speech possible. Exposure and immersion are
the key elements that create the need to communicate. This
has long been recognized in the teaching of second languages
and is clearly the key to the successful teaching of
reading (Goodman & Goodman, 1976).

The study of language development is complicated by
the fact that children learn to speak without formal
instruction at too young an age to communicate or even
remember the process. In spite of innumerable studies, no
one really knows how this is accomplished (Dale, 1976;
Jones, 1981). We do know that it involves a delicate,
individualized balance of all of its aspects which are
connected to prior experience. Language learners acquire
"high speed recognition responses" to stimuli, oral (or
written), which "sink below the threshold of attention"
when the responses have become habitual (Fries, 1962,
p. xvi). Since this is also true for skilled reading, the
exact processes for both language development and reading
for each unique individual can only be guessed at.

> For the child, unlike a textbook, does not view his
> task as a series of stepping stones labeled

> "phonology," "syntax," "semantics," and finally,
> "discourse": he is simultaneously involved in each
> enterprise. (deVilliers & deVilliers, 1978, p. 278)

It is clear, however, that children are both self-motivated and self-directed when they learn to talk. Yet in teaching reading we encourage them to let teachers direct them, as though reading were a mystique they need a guide to comprehend. No "method" of teaching reading can parallel the strategies individuals must develop for themselves in their own unique ways. Too frequently teachers try to fit a student into a mold instead of molding the instruction to the student's needs, interests, and progress. Learning of any type occurs internally, sometimes in spite of teachers. In some students the self-confidence they had when they learned to speak is undermined, causing unnecessary bewilderment. Yet the innate motivation to learn requires people of all ages to persist in seeking knowledge until they have mastered it. Some adults risk returning to school even though they have been unsuccessful in learning to read as children. But, as adults, they want to be self-directing.

> As an individual matures his <u>need</u> and <u>capacity</u> to be
> self-directing, to utilize his experience in learning,
> to identify his own readiness to learn, and to organize
> his learning around life problems, increases steadily
> from infancy to pre-adolescence, and then increases
> rapidly during adolescence. (Knowles, 1978, p. 54)

But teachers can become so intent on "teaching" that they forget adults' need for autonomy. Could it be that

treating adult nonreaders as we do children, allowing them to believe our way is better than their innate guidance system, also accounts for the lack of progress in literacy education?

Listening and Reading

Mattingly (1972), in comparing the two, says many people think listening and reading are parallel processes, except that one has input by ear and the other by eye, "but at as early a stage as possible . . . the two inputs have a common internal representation" from which point they are identical. They assume reading is "the attainment of skill in doing visually what one already knows how to do audi-torily" (p. 133). There are many similarities, but there are obviously differences. Comparisons between speech and written language have been enumerated by Fishbein and Emans (1972), Gibson (1972), Massaro (1977), Mattingly (1972), Mosenthal (1976-77), F. Smith (1975b) and many others. But F. Smith (1973) believes the "differences between written and spoken styles of language are not greater than those occurring within spoken language" (p. 348). That is, listeners are able to adapt their comprehension to the varying styles of different speakers. The ability to perform the necessary accommodations is a logical and pre-dictable necessity in reading also, in spite of the greater

syntactic complexity of much written text. Fishbein and Emans (1972) said "children apparently possess inherent characteristics that they actively use in assisting the teacher and themselves in learning to read" (p. 96), just as they did when learning to understand speech and to speak. With motivation and exposure it has been shown that children and adults have much higher comprehension of text ability than we give them credit for. "Language understanding on the part of children learning a language always precedes language production" (Dale, 1976, p. 5; Y. Goodman & Sims, 1974; Steinberg & Steinberg, 1975). Witness, for example, the discrepancies between reading comprehension and listening comprehension--"expectancy," "potential" or "auding"--scores on tests, particularly with readers who have not been able to make much progress but have good intelligence (Young, 1977/1978). Although they have been used as informal I.Q. scores, such measures are only valid in that they are based on the present level of the students' language attainments, and not necessarily on their innate, undeveloped, and therefore unknowable learning potential (Bowren & Zintz, 1977; Burns & Roe, 1976; Harris & Sipay, 1977; Richek, List, & Lerner, 1983).

Phonics and Reading

When one teaches reading on a bottom-up basis, through phonics and word analysis, there is so much incidental interference between input and comprehension that the deeper syntactic and semantic language skills never get an opportunity to be put into operation. The student forgets the preceding words while struggling over the next one (Guthrie & Tyler, 1976; Isakson & Miller, 1976). If there is too much interference or time delay these responses may become inaccessible. Considering the very real inconsistencies that are met in most reading instruction when phonetic reading and its "rules" (which often seem to have almost as many exceptions as regularities), has been taught exclusively, this is understandable (F. Smith, 1973, 1975b). Current thinking about the reading process is that:

> There is psycholinguistic evidence that the prior identification of words, or of their sounds, is neither necessary nor feasible in fluent reading, and that children who become fluent readers do not learn to read on a letter-by-letter, word-by-word basis. (F. Smith, 1975b, p. 348)

Fishbein and Emans (1972) also remind us that "the child does not learn language by combining small units of language together, but by differentiating and elaborating whole language patterns" (pp. 96-97). Nor did Steinberg and Steinberg (1975), both language specialists, believe that learning to read whole words before learning the

alphabet was at all unusual for an infant whose reading

instruction started at six months and who was reading on a

third-grade level by the age of five. They said,

> Parents do not, for example, talk in individual sound
> segments or syllables to their infants before they say
> whole words; nor do they usually attempt to verbalize
> phonological rules for them. Yet children do learn
> the phonology of their language. (p. 217)

As a result, the child was a "visual type reader who went

directly from print to meaning" (as is characteristic in

listening), "without the mediation of spoken or silent

speech" (p. 217). Stubbs (1980) gave a more complete

discussion of the relationship of spoken to written lan-

guage. Language users already have much more complicated

and useful rules in their unconscious linguistic equipment

than phonics.

As early as 1908 Edmund Burke Huey (cited in Cooper &

Petrosky, 1976) said that "meaning, indeed, dominates and

unitizes the perception of words and phrases." Until the

reader recognizes the complex part-time phonics rules are

information already in his or her oral language repertoire,

it is better to concentrate on the absorption of meaning

and allow the student to continue from there, creating

individualized ways to recognize the words in the text.

Most readers skip words they do not know or guess at them

from context, rather than put aside their train of thought to concentrate on a single word (F. Smith, 1983).

Early Readers

Reading while listening attempts to simulate, at least in some ways, the environments of children who have taught themselves to read. Durkin (1966, 1972) has intensively studied children who learned to read without any formal instruction and found some universals which give us clues as to how this might happen. It was found that these children were read to frequently. Their questions about words and letters were answered as they raised them. They were just told the words, which were memorized, rather than having phonic principles explained to them. They had a reading environment full of books and their parents were good reading-models. These factors prepared the children for reading, and when they entered school they were well ahead of the children who came from book-bare, language-bare environments (C. Chomsky, 1976; Durkin, 1972; Goodman & Goodman, 1976; Moffett & Wagner, 1976; Torrey, 1969). Durkin's studies confirmed that exposure to meaningful text is a significant catalyst underlying precocity in reading.

A History of Reading While Listening

Various authors have assigned a multiplicity of names to their modifications of the basic method of reading while listening. Essentially, with this procedure the student follows text with the eyes and often with a finger while listening to the identical material being read aloud one or more times by someone else, either in person or on a tape recording.

Because of the wide range of uses there appears to be a need for a descriptive and inclusive term for all the variations of the fundamental procedure. "Reading while listening" describes the process itself and appears to be an umbrella term for each variation and most of the descriptive terms. While the ERIC system does not yet use it as a descriptor, some information can be found using the term as an identifier. This term has been used by Martin (1977), McMahon (1980, 1983), and Neville and Pugh (1978) and others. Daly, Neville and Pugh (1975) have published an annotated bibliography on reading while listening in Leeds, England which includes some American authors. As a convenience the abbreviation R-W-L is used throughout this dissertation. The term "listening while reading" was used by Schneeberg (1977) and by Finnerty (1977/1978), but in practice it is the listening which precedes the reading in all cases.

This term is therefore technically not an accurate descrip-
tion, even in cases where the primary intent is to receive
information, as the eyes are always, in theory, following
the text.

As far back as 1881 Farnham spoke of "The Sentence
Method" when describing a similar process (Farnham, 1881).
In 1908 Huey used the term "the imitative method."
Heckleman spoke of the "neurological impress method" or
"N.I.M." (Heckleman, 1962, 1966, 1974). A variation of
his technique he called "echoing."

Some of the other better known terms were coined by
Jordan, by Hoskisson, and by Moffett and Wagner. Jordan
described "Prime-O-Tec" in 1966, Hoskisson his "Assisted
Reading" in 1975a, and Moffett and Wagner the "Lap Method"
in 1976. C. Chomsky (1976) spoke of "memorization of a
text." Schneeberg (1977) called it a "Listen-Read" or
"L-R" program, while Marie Carbo (1978) used the engaging
expression "talking books." S. Jay Samuels' (1979)
"repeated readings" has at least some of the aspects of
R-W-L.

The foregoing expressions were used for work done with
children. Variations used with adults produce equally
descriptive phraseology. A term borrowed from foreign
language teaching, is the "Audio-Lingual" method (Krail,

1967). Another adaptation used with adults is Schneiderman's "reading-learning experience" or "R-L" (1977). Perhaps the most highly developed application is Freire's "codification of generative themes" (1970a). Valerie Meyer's (1979/1980, 1982) work with adults followed the outline of Jordan's "Prime-O-Tec" (1966, 1967).

The Literatue with Children

The Sentence Method

About 1870 George L. Farnham, a teacher and a superintendent of schools, began promulgating his way of teaching reading, which he thought of as the visual expression of whole thoughts graphically depicted as printed sentences. He described his method in 1881 in a little book entitled The Sentence Method of Teaching Reading, Writing, and Spelling. He had found that a phonic approach lead to stilted reading, and even a whole word approach brought mechanical results (Farnham, 1881, Preface). Reasoning that since "the thought is the unit of thinking, it necessarily follows that the sentence is the unit of expression" (p. 17), he thereupon experimented with the teaching of sentences as thought-conveying entities.

> The results far exceeded expectation in the direct teaching of reading, spelling and writing, and led to other results in awakening the mind and in influencing conduct which were unexpected and gratifying. (Fries, 1962, p. 22)

Farnham felt that "we acquire a knowledge of the parts of an object by first considering it as a whole" (Farnham, 1881, p. 18). Therefore he spent no time on individual words or word parts unless questions about them were asked in early teaching of reading.

He urged teachers to begin with the utterance of simple sentences, often elicited from a student. (This is similar to the "language experience approach" to reading.) When children had the concept of such a sentence clearly in their minds, they were exposed to the written expression of the sentence, which they could understand, was the same thought. The sentence was altered using the various parts of speech—"common pronouns, adjectives, verbs, preposi- tions, and conjunctions" (Farnham, 1881, p. 34)—until students were familiar with a good-sized vocabulary. "Each repetition strengthens and deepens the impression, until the association of the thought with its written represen- tative is firmly made" (Farnham, 1881, p. 31). When the student could see that sentences expressed thoughts, then "the sentence wholes are gradually analyzed into their constituent words and these again, in time, into their constituent sounds and letters" (Huey, 1908, p. 274). Only then were the students exposed to books. By this time the idea that print represented thought had been clearly

established, and students found little difficulty reading text which had been thoroughly discussed beforehand. New words were discussed in advance of presentation, but if a student couldn't read a word it was immediately pronounced, with more discussion. Students were asked to use the words in sentences, both oral and written, to ascertain comprehension. The oral exercises were also helpful in the establishment of good listening habits. Farnham (1881) felt that emphasis on writing original sentences ensured success in both composition and in spelling. But Huey (1908) commented that the method "breaks down when the child attempts to read new matter for himself, so the teachers commonly say. Hence the sentence method, too, is usually combined with or supplemented by phonics" (p. 274). Yet if Farnham's method were followed as he described it, from thoughts or sentences to words to word parts, this criticism would not be valid.

The Imitative Method

Huey (1908) described a method of teaching which he called "the imitative method." He first compared it with schools in the Orient, where "children bawl in concert over a book, imitating their fellows or their teacher until they come to know what the page says and to read it for themselves" (p. 274). But then, interestingly, he immediately

made a comparison with the American child learning to read

from "books and pictures of nursery jingles and fairy tales

that were told to him, until he could read them for himself"

(p. 274). He quoted a Miss Everett, who wrote in the New

York Teachers' Monographs, that "some day the debris and

obstrusive technique of reading methods may melt away into

the simplicity of some such practice as this" (Huey, 1908,

p. 274). A full description of the child's learning to read

naturally is given on pages 329-335 in The Pedagogy of

Reading (Huey, 1908), and is well worth the reading. The

imitative method is surprisingly in accord with Moffett and

Wagner's (1976) description of the "Lap Method," which will

be described shortly. Huey qualified his method by saying

it happens only in "an environment of books, papers, notices,

printed language, as omnipresent as was the spoken language"

(p. 330). Being read to and having questions answered are

also necessary adjuncts to the success of this method of

learning to read. This is also in complete concurrence with

Durkin's later studies (1966) of children who read early.

Neurological Impress Method

Heckleman's (1966) "Neurological Impress Method"

(N.I.M.), is probably the best known of all the designations

for R-W-L. Heckleman calls the N.I.M. a procedure calling

for a multisensory approach in remedial reading using ears,

eyes and fingers to follow the text. He found it most effective when employed in a one-to-one relationship, although his unpublished studies were done with groups of 6 and 24 students. He recommended using N.I.M. for 15 minutes a day for a total of from 8 to 12 hours, and often found "a sharp rise in achievement at about the eighth hour of instruction" (p. 236).

Heckleman (1966) started with text which was slightly below the child's reading level, gradually increasing the difficulty. He read it aloud, close to the child's ear, expecting the student to read along with him. The instructor kept a little ahead of the student's voice but adapted speed according to the needs of the student, increasing it as soon as possible, so that sometimes "the student is literally dragged to higher rates of speed in the reading process" (p. 238).

In training students to follow the text Heckleman found that repeating initial lines or paragraphs several times helped them learn to keep up. For students who could not handle the Impress Method at all, Heckleman abbreviated this method to have the child repeat sentences or just phrases as they were read aloud. This he called "echoing." For group work Heckleman recommended the use of a microphone and earphones so the students could not hear each

other's mistakes. He also found filmstrips and an opaque projector beneficial. A warning that students not be pushed beyond their expectancy level was given, as there would not be much gain thereafter. He believed, "No learning technique can create capacity; it can only expand learning to capacity" (p. 239).

A student was urged not to think of the N.I.M. as reading, as "we are training him to slide his eyes across the paper" (p. 237). No correcting was done, nor was any questioning done to check comprehension. Heckleman felt

> this reading technique should be considered a part of an audio-neural conditioning process whereby the incorrect reading habits of the child are suppressed and then replaced with correct, fluid reading habits. (p. 237)

It is preplexing that Heckleman did not consider his method to be reading, nor allow his students to consider it as such. It is precisely such following of continuous text that is lost when readers are exposed only to word-by-word analysis, destroying their linguistic self-confidence. It is also significant that Heckleman found it necessary to "re-establish" a habit which is otherwise natural to both listeners and good readers.

Prime-O-Tec

William C. Jordan (1971) compared his "Prime-O-Tec" to the old silent moving picture theaters which "probably taught more children to read than did the local school marm" (p. 6),

when parents read the subtitles aloud to their children

synchronously with their appearance on the screen.   In his

multisensory approach,

> The teacher obtains a set of trade books at the
> preprimer level and puts the stories on sound tape,
> word for word.   Having seated the children around the
> reading table, she distributes a book to each child,
> sees that each has his earphones in place, and turns
> on the tape recorder.   She watches for a moment to see
> that all is working well, and if it is, she then is
> free to devote her time to the other groups. . . .
> The children follow the teacher in the book as she
> reads and talks to them from the tape through the
> earphones.   (Jordan, 1966, p. 542)

On the tape the teacher points out and discusses pic-

tures and rings a bell to announce the turning of a page.

There are usually two readings, one slow, the second faster.

The children find that reading can be a pleasant experience,

just like talking, instead of the hesitant, painful, ques-

tioning, and uncertain experiences they usually have had

with their own and others' oral reading (Jordan, 1967).

> After going through a book three or four times, a fast
> group can sit down in a reading circle and read the
> whole book, with understanding, to the teacher.
> Obviously, the middle and slower groups of children
> take longer, but because interest is high, reading
> becomes a challenge instead of a chore.   (Jordan,
> 1966, p. 542)

Jordan (1966) emphasized that Prime-O-Tec is not a

substitute for a regular reading program, but a supplement,

taking the place of much seatwork, which is often just

busywork.   The student is exposed to a variety of good

literature, providing a broader language base than a controlled vocabulary test alone, and the chance to listen again and again provides the repetition necessary for learning. The use of earphones is an insulating factor, aiding attention. Social studies and arithmetic lessons can also be taped, multiplying teacher time, and Jordan said Prime-O-Tec was being tried "throughout the grades and in all subjects" (p. 543).

When Prime-O-Tec was first used average first-grade classes scored exactly 2.0, or beginning second grade reading level at the end of a year of ordinary reading instruction. At the close of the study (the length of the study is not given), classes using other special methods scored 2.5, but classes taught using Prime-O-Tec scored a startling 3.4 (Jordan, 1966).

Assisted Reading

Hoskisson (1975b) also worked with beginning readers, and his work is strikingly similar to Farnham's. He did not see any difference between the ability to process spoken language and the ability to process language read to children, which they would eventually read for themselves, provided it was presented in a complete context. He noted that both Slobin and McNeill felt that children learn the more comprehensive rules of language before the more complex aspects, or learn to speak by "successive

approximation," and recommended starting the teaching of
reading with complete sentences, not isolated words. In
other words, they "should learn to read by reading, just
as they learn to speak by speaking" (p. 444), when immersed
in a reading environment.

Hoskisson divided his "assisted reading" into three
stages:

Stage I. The child is read to and repeats the phrase
or sentence while following with eyes and finger

Stage II. Essentially the same, but the child is
allowed to read the words. he or she is able to

Stage III. The child is allowed to read and the
person assisting supplies the unknown words.
(Hoskisson, 1975a, 1975b)

Hoskisson (1975b) repeatedly emphasized that the important
factor to be considered with students is retention of mean-
ing, that "the flow of reading is not supposed to be
interrupted . . . because the syntactic and semantic cues
that come from a smooth flow of language will not be
available to them" (p. 448). He also insisted that pre-
primers not be used, because of their poor syntax. If done
properly, he said, children do not experience failure
because they are working at their own pace, and therefore
motivation remains high.

When using assisted reading with second graders,
Hoskisson and Krohm (1974) used recorded and taped materials

and had the children work in reading couples when they felt
ready to read the materials on their own, the partner
supplying any words not immediately recognized. Among the
findings were the following:

  - Students had more confidence in their reading
  ability.

  - Students attacked new words more frequently and
  with greater success.

  - Students gained an understanding that learning the
  rules helped with word attack.

  - Students showed more awareness of vocabulary met
  within a context.

  - Students were more aware of their own reading level.

  - Students could be exposed to a greater variety of
  literature.

  - Students had improved listening skills and greater
  attention span.

  - Students' ability to follow taped and recorded
  materials improved.

In an experiment done with 103 kindergarten children
Hoskisson and Biskin (1975) found gain in word recognition
scores of 110.097 vs. 7.737 for the low-readiness group
using assisted reading as against their control groups,
74.908 vs. 48.098 for the middle-readiness groups, and
338.500 vs. 6.430 for the high readiness groups. Scores
for generalization to new materials for the low groups were
13.430 vs. 1.903, middle groups 9.83 vs. 12.848, and high
groups 39.080 vs. 1.290.

The Lap Method

Moffett (1981) concurred with Farnham (1881) when he said,

> Before speech can be encoded into print or decoded
> from print, there must be the prior level of the
> thought-speech relationship, thought into speech,
> and, before that, the prerequisite of experience
> into thought. (p. 45)

He thought of reading as "basically a media shift" (p. 45), and said the learner is "matching off vocal sounds he already knows with something new, which is the sights of the language . . ." (p. 44) or, put in psychological terms, using the principles of paired association.

While his "lap method" is often called "read-along," his literal term comes from the method early readers use to learn to read without instruction. He describes the lap method as similar to what happens when a young child is read to over a period of many, many hours (Moffett & Wagner, 1976). The child begins to recognize some of the text. Using this as a cue or "bench mark," soon all of the text is memorized and synchronized with the voice of the reader. Unconsciously noting similarities in certain words, the child suddenly begins to "crack the code" without instruction, neither phonics or any other. The progression is from whole to part, or "top down." The meaning cues are lost unless the context remains whole, as are the syntax

cues. Motivation is minimal without meaning. In explaining

the process Moffett and Wagner (1976) said:

> What happens when a person follows a text while hearing
> it read is that he matches off speech with print very
> grossly at first and then more and more finely.
> Gradually he analyzes the big blocks of print, discrim-
> inates among the different words, and narrows his
> synchronizing focus down more and more--from a whole
> page or paragraph to a sentence, then to a phrase or
> word, then eventually to each of the forty-odd phonemes
> of English. (p. 202)

The authors attributed the success of this intrinsic

learning to the relaxed, noninstructional situation, which

allows children to use their innate resources freely. They

felt that it is in such a permissive atmosphere that all

true learning takes place. School environments are often

full of pressure and conscious striving, killing the secur-

ity which allows natural learning to take place. The lap

method demonstrates that knowledge is not something that

exists outside of a person, but is constructed within by

the learner. Where the desire to learn is present learning

will happen in its selectively individualized appropriate

sequences.

Moffett and Wagner (1976) said their lap method "works

for many youngsters and might work for all under the right

conditions, even without other methods" (p. 201). They

felt that children can and do generalize phonics rules

without instruction, just as they generalized the basic

linguistic rules when they learned to speak because they are born with these abilities.

> So it may very well be true--and we suspect it is--that given words enough and time, virtually any person <u>might</u> learn to read by the lap method alone, if in the beginning he followed with his eyes a moving finger that allowed him to synchronize the audio and the video, voice and print. (Moffett & Wagner, 1976, p. 201)

While the lap method ideally begins on the lap of a parent or other caretaker of a very young child--grandparent, sibling, baby sitter, nursery school teacher--with the child following the text which is read aloud with his or her eyes, Moffett and Wagner (1976) also presented numerous modifications suitable for students of any age. All of the following adapt to a reading while listening presentation: the use of aides; other children, either peers or children from an older class; classroom volunteers of various ethnic groups to model dialect stories; a listening library of recordings or tapes; transcripts of interviews, talk shows, hearings, court trials; songs they can learn to sing on their own; an overhead projector or chalkboard; a controlled reader.

The language-experience approach is seen as "the writing counterpart to the lap method in reading" (Moffett & Wagner, 1976, p. 204). It has the advantage that the learner already knows what he or she has said, and watching

one's words being written down in a strong impetus to learning them. Large amounts of language experience are necessary to demonstrate the consistencies of print. While Moffett and Wagner (1976) caution that this could become a tedious, time-consuming chore in large classes unless aides were available to help, Palmer (1986) has suggested creating group stories to get around this problem.

Listen-Read

First through third grade students in Schneeberg's (1977) "listen-read" program read 30 to 50 books a year and in the fourth grade 70 to 80. Books were introduced through discussion, and concepts were discussed. Different ways of oral reading were used:

> 1) Reading by the teacher in person or on a tape. Children "finger-read," following the text with their fingers, to insure matching of print and voice.

> 2) Echo reading, where the children repeated a phrase or sentence that had just been read for them. Inflections and phrasing were imitated.

> 3) Listening centers were used after teachers were sure children were capable of matching print to sound. (p. 630)

Schneeberg (1977) intermingled all the language arts with reading activities; thus, discussion and writing were also given a great deal of attention for, as she said, "growth in one enhances development in another" (p. 632).

Aside from superior grade level reading achievement, Schneeberg (1977) found the following assets:

- Teachers like L-R and recruit other teachers to use it

- Children love it

- Children willingly spend time at it and borrow the books from the library after they have been read in class

- They learn to write without assistance and "writing becomes a favorite activity"

- Administrators like the larger varieties of concepts children are able to handle

- Children can "read" beyond their instructional levels

- Phrasing and expression in oral reading are good

- Discussión encourages retentive listening

- Facility in expressing ideas improves

- Self-confidence blossoms

- "Interest runs high and there is excitement in learning" (Schneeberg, 1977, p. 635)

Talking Books

Marie Carbo (1978, 1981) worked with children with severe learning handicaps using what she terms "talking books." She developed some excellent guidelines for reading material onto tapes. The three basics of Carbo's approach include cueing the pages, phrasing, and "tactual reinforcement" or following with the finger to improve focus. She individualized recordings by using shorter phrases, shorter selections, and a slower pace for students with poorer reading abilities and by varying the difficulty of the text. If the material selected was at or below

the student's ability level, she read at a more normal
pace, with longer phrases and selections. She found that
the phrase reading helped to lessen reversals and word-by-
word reading. Eventually Carbo collected a library of
recordings but kept the content of each side of a tape at
what a student could work on in one day, thus ensuring
success at all times. She supplemented the tapes with
activity cards, games, audio cards, and reading skills
exercises, which were used after the children had gained a
basic vocabulary and some security in their reading.

She found substantial gains in comprehension, word
recognition, and word meaning and said, "Some of the
children appear to have understood intuitively and applied
phonics rules without formal instruction" (1978, p. 267).
Talking books were particularly effective with students
with memory problems or with those who did not learn with a
phonics approach. Also, older students who had been turned
off from reading regained interest using her approach.
Carbo found that talking books have had a psychotherapeutic
effect on her students, who, she reported, made reading
gains of from three months to as high as 15 months in only
three months' time.

The Method of Repeated Readings

Samuels' (1979) "method of repeated readings" was
done with or without audio support. As the term indicates,

students went over material many times and read it orally at intervals to measure progress. Samuels explained to students that they were doing what athletes do to become proficient in a skill--practicing to develop speed and smoothness. He also made comparisons with musicianship, citing practice as a key element for success.

Word recognition errors and reading rate were recorded so that students could observe their progress graphically, which benefited motivation. Sometimes earlier and later readings were tape recorded for student comparison. As the decoding barrier to meaning was overcome, comprehension improved. Sometimes a different comprehension question was asked at each rereading, to challenge comprehension. At first passages were short, but as skill increased these were lengthened. A rate of 85 words a minute was the initial goal, and speed rather than accuracy was emphasized. Samuels felt that if the emphasis had been on accuracy, tensions due to fear of making a mistake would have prevented fluency.

The rationale behind this comes from LaBerge and Samuels' (1974) theory of automatic information processing or "automaticity," which theorizes that really fluent readers do not spend time on decoding and have all their attention available for comprehension. Samuels (1979)

believed there are three stages of word recognition: nonaccurate, where unfamiliar words are being decoded; accurate, where words are recognized when attention is focused on them; and automatic, when full attention is on comprehension and expression, since the words are completely familiar. Repeated reading provides the practice needed to achieve automaticity. In reading while listening the student has the opportunity to review the material as many times as is necessary until he or she feels automaticity as been achieved.

Memorization of a Text

C. Chomsky (1976) said the method she called "memorization of a text" captured the attention of students while it made large amounts of textual material accessible to turned-off slow readers. Through repeated listening of taped books while following in texts, the students she observed were able to shift their focus from fragmented words and word parts to relearning to apply their innate semantic and syntactic skills to their reading materials. They were allowed to set their own pace until they felt they had reached fluency, choosing from the limited selection of books those they felt they wanted to read. At first it required many listenings to be able to reproduce a book with acceptable

accuracy, but succeeding books were learned in shorter and shorter periods of time.

C. Chomsky (1976) did not consider this true reading, but it was clearly not just memorization, since the students needed cues from the books to help them "read." She considered it an acceptable in-between stage. Since there was eventually transfer to other materials, and students began to attempt to read whatever print they came across spontaneously as turned-on readers do, it appears, indeed, to have been true reading.

The built-in factor of sure success was given as a primary cause of a change in these children's attitudes toward reading. Increased input through the audio mode and the blocking of distractions through the use of earphones were also given credit. Exercises which focused attention on the orthographic features of individual words helped, as did the accumulation of word banks, insuring that text was not merely memorized. Writing was also an integral part of C. Chomsky's (1976) program, and students also began to take pleasure in this activity. In time the children were more anxious to work on the text than on isolated word "games." "It began to appear superfluous and somewhat arbitrary to put them through analytical work that they almost did not need" (p. 296). The children's interest in

writing and discussion of the stories did remain high, however.

The Literature with Adults

It has been suggested that there may be a "critical period" for learning to read, as has been hypothesized there is for language development (Krail, 1967; Lenneberg, 1967). This is a period when learning to speak, learning to read, or learning a second language was thought to happen most easily. After this stage, usually described as ending at adolescence, the acquisition of each of these forms of communication was thought to become increasingly difficult and not guaranteed without an exceptional amount of effort (Havighurst, 1952; Lenneberg, 1967).

Asher (1969), along with Krashen (1973), disagrees with this theory. Asher reports on an unusual study in which it was found that when physical movement was synchronized with learning a second language adults were able to learn Russian much faster than the children in the study, indicating that other relevant factors besides age need to be taken into account when making comparisons between children and adults.

The greater challenge, then, appears to be to discover and to provide the proper environment for students of a particular age to succeed in learning a language or similar

accomplishments. Adults <u>do</u> learn to read. Adults <u>can</u> learn second languages. Curtiss even documented an adolescent who learned to speak after puberty, albeit in a somewhat limited fashion (deVilliers & deVilliers, 1978).

Adults often learn to read in spite of untrained teachers, tedious materials and unproductive methods. One author suggested that untrained and unqualified teachers are an asset to the new reader, concluding that it may be individualized teaching that makes the most difference (Hoffman, 1980). Could it be that the <u>tabula rasa</u> of inexperienced teachers opens them to tune in to each student's needs and assets more effectively than those who embark on a preset course with prejudiced, often prepro-grammed, approaches? Or do these teachers send signals to their students that they are on their own, and that the effort to learn to read will have to come from within themselves?

The entire field of adult basic education has been neglected until recently, and the literature on using R-W-L with adults is still scarce. Some of it is still untested theory. But the results with children have been fairly consistently positive, and the little that exists for adults should be mentioned and its possibilities examined.

Assisted Reading

Jones (1981), in <u>Reading Instruction for the Adult Illiterate</u>, suggested the use of Hoskisson's "assisted reading" with adult learners. He, too, likened the process of learning to read with that of learning to speak. He agreed with Frank Smith (1973) in that both processes are learned to a much greater extent than they can be taught. Assisted reading is particularly effective, he said, when used with the language experience approach, which utilizes stories dictated by the student. He also recommended using a variety of materials, especially self-selected materials, with frequent review. Jones (1981) suggested using the cloze procedure with assisted reading, encouraging the student to supply unread words from context.

> The crucial assumption in assisted reading is that the key element in all language processes is fluency, and this must not be destroyed. Just as the child learns to speak from repeated exposure to a full context of oral language, the beginning reader learns from repeated interaction with the syntactically complete printed message. At no time, even in the third stage of the assisted reading process, is the reader asked to sound out words or to focus on separate word elements; he is simply supplied with words he does not know. In this manner, the fluency of reading as a language process is preserved. (p. 98)

The Audio-Lingual Approach

Krail's (1967) proposal for using the audio-lingual approach, a foreign language teaching technique, with adult reading students is in accord with Asher's (1981)

observations that a foreign language is easier to learn
when its sounds and prosidic features are familiar. In
foreign language study, Krail said, students say only what
they have heard and comprehended, read only what they have
heard, comprehended and said, and write only what they have
heard, comprehended, said and read. However, literacy
students would have an advantage over the foreign language
student because the language change is not as drastic.

New words would be presented on an oral basis before
any study of written word lists.

> There would be at least two levels . . . and they would
> be of such a nature that the learner could, by using
> materials based on these lists, proceed from the spoken
> to the printed page. These lists would contain many
> root words and very few polysyllables. (Krail, 1967,
> p. 96)

Krail suggested using a "mim-mem" technique, in which
the teacher first reads a dialogue which the class repeats
or "mimics" several times until it is practically memorized.
Only then is a script distributed. Even then the teacher
reads the script to the class at least once more. The
class at that point reads the script in chorus, and after
all this preparation, individual students would be asked to
read.

Constructing dialogues to emphasize particular
phonemes, such as an /f/ sound represented by words con-
taining f, ff, ph and gh was also proposed by Krail (1967).

These, and the study of new syntactical forms of words would only be worked on from older review materials. Previously learned structures would then be recombined to make a new story without mim-mem. Words could be used in different ways through affix changes. There should be no emphasis on speed, which would increase with increased practice and comprehension.

It is not clear that Krail's method has been tried with reading students, but the theory shows good understanding from a linguistic point of view and might hold promise.

Codification of Generative Themes

Friere (1970a, 1970b) wrote that oppressed people could not become literate until they realized that becoming literate is part of their right to transform their world by dealing with the injustices that keep them in ignorance. He said they had been "domesticated" (1970b, p. 221) and had been taught a "culture of silence" (1970a, p. 10) through a "banking" (1970a, p. 58) method of education which attempts to deposit information into people without any real involvement on their parts. By accepting this they sacrificed their right to think and to act in their best interests. Their fatalistic view of the world would only change when students accepted responsibility for changing

their lives or they would not see any need for literacy. Through dialogue, or problem posing education (1970a, p. 66), Freire would have them become aware that any change in their circumstances must come from inside themselves. As he put it, "the literacy process must relate speaking the word to transforming reality" (1970b, p. 213). He called this "conscientization" (1970a, p. 19).

Freire would have the words students learn to read be words they choose, through the dialogue they engage in to recognize or own their freedom. These would be "active" or "generative" words with intensive meaning on the level of deep structure, words full of emotion; words which would bring hope for a better life. This is somewhat similar to Sylvia Ashton-Warner's (1963) "organic" words, except that in Spanish languages root words would be chosen which could be enlarged by the addition of syllables. Reading materials would be "codified" through the visual, tactile or auditive channels, or combinations of them. We would say this was a multi-media approach. Codification may be translated as "a problem-posing situation to be discussed" (1970a, pp. 115-116).

Kozol (1978) reported on the 1961 campaign to eradicate illiteracy in Cuba, which put Freire's reasoning into action. A primer containing 15 stories was codified around

generative words about life in Cuba. Each chapter was

preceded by a picture of Cuban life to provoke discussion.

A sequence to be followed in each lesson was defined:

> First, reading. Only after that would we ask anyone
> to write. The goal was to identify each written symbol
> with the sound it represents. By repetition, and in
> concord with the teacher, the pupil would master the
> specific sounds. Then we would ask each pupil to
> attempt a reading on his own. Once this was done, we
> would begin the breakdown and analysis of syllables.
> (Kozol, 1978, pp. 14-15)

> (The book was) intricately paced to build from single
> words to basic phrases, then to sentences and simple
> paragraphs, all of them resting upon the recognition
> of initial active words and generative themes, up to
> the point where writing and reading in themselves
> become the end result, whether the starting themes
> remain predominant within the learner's mind or not.
> (Kozol, 1978, p. 18)

It is claimed that in ten months the literacy campaign

achieved the goal of 100% literacy to a "third grade" level

for Cuba. Kozol (1978) compared this with other literacy

campaigns on which millions of dollars have been spent, but

most of which have resulted in failure because:

> Education of adult illiterates without some parallel
> form of socio-economic transformation is unthinkable.
> It has to be accompanied by food and land and health
> care and the rest. Without these items no endeavor of
> this kind has ever yet achieved even a marginal success.
> (p. 74)

Many Cubans continued their education, setting higher goals

for their future education.

The repetition inherent in this method is similar to

R-W-L, although it was primarily oral rather than taped.

A very strong aspect of the method is that the materials used were as meaningful to the students as in any method reviewed. Basing any reading program upon students' motivations will obviously have much more success than drill on isolated words.

Prime-O-Tec

When Meyer (1980) used Jordan's Prime-O-Tec (1966, 1967, 1971) with ten adult basic education students in her doctoral study, she said that until then the study was the only one of its kind in the area of reading with adult learners (1982). After the students worked with Prime-O-Tec for seven hours, Meyer found that her experimental students had significantly greater gains statistically in vocabulary and total reading grade equivalency levels as measured by the Tests of Adult Basic Education, Reading (California Testing Bureau, 1976) than her controls. She also found a statistically significant correlation with total reading gains, but, inexplicably, not with reading comprehension.

In explaining the short amount of time given to Prime-O-Tec in this study for these students, Meyer said:

> The drop-out rate at our center was 40 to 60%. I simply could not count on holding an N of 20 for 15 weeks. Also, I wanted no other form of direct reading instruction to occur during the study. . . . In my situation, all students were G.E.D. candidates. . . .

My logic was to move them from auditory/visual to visual as rapidly as possible. (1983, personal correspondance)

Some of the reading while listening studies done with children have been done concurrently with other types of instruction. Jordan (1967, 1971), in particular, has been firm in asserting that other means of instruction should continue, and that Prime-O-Tec should be used as a supplement to the developmental reading program. Meyer's results seem to indicate that Prime-O-Tec in isolation can have positive results, also.

Information Reading Technique

In some situations R-W-L is used, not as a means of teaching reading, per se, but primarily as a means of imparting and absorbing information in content areas. Schneiderman (1977) called this the Information Reading Technique, or I.R.T. It is a way "to learn needed information and build a reading-learning experience, a way of practicing getting information from material read" (p. 17).

When using I.R.T. in the Right-to-Read Program at Ohio State University, both the student and tutor discussed what information was needed. They then found relevant material. After discussion of some of the concepts that might be covered, the student designed questions that needed answering. The tutor read the material aloud in small

segments, and they discussed each part. After this the learner told what had been learned. This was written down or recorded by the tutor and was used as a language experience story.

While the I.R.T. does not require the student to read the original material (which may be at any level of difficulty) or necessarily follow with the eyes, this would have been a good time for R-W-L. When the text was transcribed into the students' own language, comprehension was ensured before any attempt at reading was made. Listening, comprehension and writing skills were developed on subject matter of high interest using a listening format.

Tape Recorded Texts

More and more institutions have found that the accessibility of books on tape need no longer be limited to the blind, and they are being used for learning disabled students as well. Among them, Curry College (1982) in Milton, Massachusetts has reasoned that tape-recorded textbooks enable the student to learn rapidly through use of eyes and ears simultaneously. The goal in Curry College's Program of Assistance in Learning is to help a student become an independent learner, aware of his strengths and weaknesses, in one year. The college is currently engaged in a study to verify this assumption. Short range results

show promise for some students, but the study is incomplete
to date.

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHOD

Any class of adult literacy students may bring a
potpourri of challenges to the teacher, as inability to
read can have many causes--learning disabilities, emotional
problems, low innate ability; hearing, vision, or language
problems; an early inability to attend school due to ill-
ness or an obligation to help a farming family survive--
the list goes on and on. It is not unusual that the least
successful students have complex combinations of problems
which make their identification the more difficult.
Grouping becomes impracticable and even individualized
instruction can be frustratingly slow-moving.

The life experiences of literacy students are diverse
and have been studied inadequately, so that research in
teaching in this area has not risen much above the ground
floor. Before one can do quantitative research one must
have sufficient information about one's subjects to be able
to assume that conclusions will be generalizable. This is
not yet the case in Adult Basic Education, which provides
abundant territory for investigating individuals through
less formalized procedures. In such instances it is
logical to first gather "soft" data, "rich in descriptions

of people, places and conversations not easily handled by statistical procedures" (Bogdan & Biklen, 1982, p. 2).

Qualitative research methods have been extensively used to study cultures, particularly in the fields of sociology and anthropology. The culture of the adult illiterate is one with which most educated people rarely come into direct contact. It would be well, therefore, to study this culture in order to understand how to approach its members if one would support their efforts to learn to read.

Max Weber, one of the originators of interpretive studies, described two kinds of understanding--observational and explanatory (Parkin, 1982). In-depth observation, sometimes called "thick description" (Geertz, 1973), examines cultures in an attempt to explain them better. Through dialogue during the teaching process the literacy understandings of the students in this dissertation and, insofar as possible, the factors which determined them were investigated. It was predicated that better understanding would ultimately lead to improved teaching.

The case study method appeared to be appropriate for use in this study. In case studies real life situations are studied in their natural settings. A picture of the background, learning styles, and abilities of individual

students gradually emerged. Most of the interactions in this study were not planned in advance, but arose within the context of a lesson according to the apparent needs of the moment. The mutual goal was to improve the reading ability of each student. The tutor observed what happened during the tutoring sessions, although the tutor also influenced events within the tutoring situation. Spontaneity was necessary to allow both tutor and tutee the freedom to do their best to aim toward their common goal. This precluded rigid preplanning. It is just such a situation that is appropriate for qualitative research. However, because the field of reading is already saturated with quantitative data, particularly in research with children, some quantitative findings are woven into this study where appropriate. This is in accordance with Weber's beliefs.

> Weber makes it perfectly plain that the Verstehen approach is not to be thought of as the be-all and end-all of social explanation. It has to be supplemented by other techniques of investigation, including the 'scientific' efforts favoured by the positivists. In fact, Weber occasionally seems to look upon Verstehen as a fruitful source of hypotheses about behavior - hypotheses that must then be subjected to empirical scrutiny and validation. And in doing this it is quite in order to bring into play forensic skills and quantitative methods in the classic Durkheimian fashion. (Parkin, 1982, p. 20)

Bogdan and Biklen (1982) wrote:

While people conducting qualitative research may develop a focus as they collect data, they do not

approach the research with specific questions to answer
or hypotheses to test. They are concerned as well with
understanding behavior from the subject's own frame of
reference. (p. 2)

Nevertheless, attempts by the tutor to utilize reading
while listening were made. Students were given the freedom
to reject this method, and alternate methods were used as
was deemed appropriate. At no time were the apparent needs
of the student subservient to a method, so that the actual
teaching method may be considered eclectic. When R-W-L did
not appear to be the appropriate method, it was abandoned.
Respecting the need of the adult learner to guide his or
her own learning also took precedence over teacher-made
goals. Since the focus of this study was R-W-L, time spent
on other methods is only briefly touched on. It is assumed
that the reader of this dissertation is familiar with most
methods of reading instruction. The lessons developed from
the needs, interests and abilities of the students and what
preplanning was done, was, as much as possible, by mutual
agreement.

Description of Setting

The tutoring was done with five students at a community
college. The Adult Basic Education program sponsored by
this community college consisted of 157 classes scattered
throughout the county in schools, churches, prisons,

nursing homes, community centers, YMCAs, libraries, sheltered workshops, housing projects and also in business and industry. Average class size was said to be 14.2 students, but the range was wide. About half of these classes functioned with a teacher and at least one volunteer. The remainder had only the one teacher. Classes met mornings, afternoons, evenings or all day from 9 until 3 o'clock. They met four times a week during the day and twice a week for three hours in the evenings. Students were assigned to teachers on the basis of community location, transportation facilities, and test scores, if applicable.

Attendance was reported to range from 44% to as high as 95% in the custodial facilities such as prisons and nursing homes, where attending was either compulsory or easier because of fewer conflicting life problems. Students remained in the program for periods ranging from a few weeks to as high as four or five years. It was reported that about 6% of students dropped out for various reasons during a quarter, while about 16% graduated out of the program annually.

The minimal qualification for a teacher was a B.A. or B.S. degree, although four teachers were still working on their degrees. Some of the areas these degrees were in are

psychology, mathematics, English, reading, and counseling, all of which were considered to be helpful to teachers of A.B.E. students. Several of the teachers had master's degrees or were working on one. All teachers were paid on an hourly basis except the two recruiter/instructors.

Selection of Students

While reading while listening can be beneficial at all stages of reading instruction (Matthews, 1987), my primary interest in the study was to see how R-W-L could be used with beginning readers, students whose self-concepts-as-learners were at rock bottom, whose progress would otherwise be very slow. I had requested three of the lowest scoring reading students to work with, but interviewed seven adults before deciding on three who were not yet reading independently. The candidates read from materials of their own choosing, which they were using in their classrooms. Two of the seven were told as gently as possible that their reading was so good that they could not be chosen for the study. Two others were told that I could only work with three students in the daily three-hour period but that they would be held in reserve in case any of the original three was absent. This turned out to be propitious. All the students were clearly told that good attendance was essential to the success of the study,

which lasted 14 weeks. Attendance for the five students ranged from 35% to 75%, for a diversity of reasons, ranging from minor illness to car breakdowns to family obligations to "my sister stole my bus tickets and I was so mad I decided I wasn't coming any more." Sometimes a student did not attempt to explain an absence, and it was understood that the student simply could not have extended herself or himself that day. Tutors were so scarce that several other students also asked to be worked with. They had to be told that there simply was not room in my schedule for additional students.

Because it is necessary to ensure the anonymity of the students when scrutinizing their progress in such detail in a public medium, each one has been given an alias. In all other ways their unique personhood has been protected.

Evaluation

Formal testing was avoided throughout the study. Since the only valid purpose of evaluation is to help tutor and student direct instruction based on the needs of the moment, evaluation was informal and ongoing, according to the situation rather than sporadic and was accomplished as mutually as possible (Johnston, 1987).

Students themselves have no need for formal testing, neither at the outset nor at closure. They are only too

aware of their low abilities and vast deficits. The anxiety produced by testing would, in fact, have been an impediment to maintaining the relaxed atmosphere necessary for the establishment of good rapport and for learning to take place uninhibitedly. It was felt that the anxiety factor would prevent students from doing their best on a formal test, making results unreliable, in any case. "Strong anxiety can interfere with performance on tests or in classroom activities" (Harris & Sipay, 1977, p. 198). Many examples of studies which show that the anxiety factor in low-ability students represses their best efforts have been given by Chahbazi (1971).

An exceptionally verbal and perceptive student of an adult reading tutor called tests "a put down" and said he "froze" when presented with any testing situation. He said that when he just heard the word "test" his heart speeded up a couple of beats and that his concentration fell off in a testing situation. He paid attention to every distraction instead of what was in front of him. He felt he might test better if there were no one around and the test was not time limited.

Newman (1980) stated the situation well when she said:

When adult basic education students first enroll for instruction, they are testing the water. If they find it comfortable, warmly inviting, and a place of promise

for their future well-being, they may stay. If it
appears cold or threatening, they will quickly with-
draw. Adult basic educators must always face the fact
that the difference between adult and juvenile learners
is that the adults make their own choice about attend-
ing the class. Another difference between child and
adult beginning readers is their reactions to taking
tests. Unlike children, the adults' unfulfilled school
experiences, which their inability to read may have
produced, have developed in them a resistance to tests.
    If adults are given a formal test at their first
training session and thus reminded of what a failure
they have been in tasks involving reading and writing,
they may very likely choose not to return for the
second session. By contrast, think how adults might
feel if they are welcomed cordially. (p. 15)

The novelty of a test-taking role may also be selec-

tively biasing for students of different educational levels.

Those with little formal schooling are more likely to pro-

duce nonrepresentative behavior. Glasser (1969) reports

that even very talented students have been found to improve

the quality of their effort in a nontest situation (p. 68).

It is also questionable whether tests of adult reading

students communicate anything valid. Grotelueschen, Gooler

and Knox (1976) stated,

Appropriate standardized tests for undereducated
adults have been almost non-existent. When available,
such test results offer only limited insights into the
range of capabilities of a given individual. (p. 24)

These authors saw nothing wrong with using conversations

and rap sessions as informal evaluative devices.

I do not feel appropriate tests can be constructed for

A.B.E. students because of the complexities of adult

learning, where students may block on simpler material but be able to handle material on a subject with which they are fully familiar even though it is on a much higher level of difficulty. Don Brown (1982) has called this the "Swiss-cheese effect." Nafziger, Thompson, Hiscox and Owen (1976) have described the inutility of testing these students thus:

> The multifaceted nature of literacy has often been glossed over through the use of such composite scores as standard scores and grade level equivalents. For example, one might say, "He is reading at grade level 7.2"; in a very general way, this kind of normative statement relates a particular person's performance on some unknown reading task to the performance of others at a particular—in this case educational—level. It is not usually clear how this level of performance would relate to any other possible literacy tasks. (p. 15)

Students who have failed throughout their educational experience relive the misery of constant past failures and seek an object for the buried resentments which they have accumulated against those who have repeatedly labeled them as failures. Too frequently their self-concepts are the safest targets. (Who would want to be a "Peppermint Patty" with predictable, omnipresent D-minuses?) For me, for my acquaintances and for my students, errors are acceptable; and students are still acceptable as individuals when they make an error. Unfortunately, part of the hidden agenda of education is that those who score low on tests are not O.K.

and they are treated accordingly. Glasser's (1969) humanity
was quite evident when he said, "People should have second
chances, third chances, fourth and fifth chances, because
there is no harm either to them or to society" in giving
them as many chances as they need to succeed (p. 64).

Assessment

Because of the fallibilities of formal testing with
literacy students, assessment of their work in this study
was done informally. Johnston (1987) said the evaluation
expertise that is most useful is that which is done each
day in a classroom, on a moment-to-moment basis. He said
informal evaluation and hunches "form the basis of instruc-
tional decisions far more than do test scores" (p. 744).
This he called "process oriented evaluation" (p. 747), which
helps students learn to self-evaluate, leading ultimately
to independence. This is an important goal for students
of any age and fits in particularly well with the need of
adult students for autonomy.

Many kinds of informal evaluation were used within the
context of this study. A predicted list of possibilities
was compiled to which, as the study progressed, the tutor
looked for opportunities to base instructional decisions
upon on a moment-to-moment basis.

1. Student statements about:

   - their abilities to recognize words
   - their comfort using R-W-L
   - their anxieties
   - their own assessment of progress

2. Comparison of tapes of early and later achievement noting the following:

   - left to right tracking (finger pointing)
   - suitability of tracking to words and syllables
   - carry-over of words practiced from one reading to another
   - types and complexity of materials
   - time necessary to learn to read a selection
   - lengths of selections learned
   - elimination of previous errors

3. Ability to read word families

4. Achievement on a word list--numbers of words recognized

5. Ability to insert words, as in Hoskisson's Stage Two

6. Verbalization of personalized methods of remembering

7. Teacher observation, intuition, and statements

8. Types of miscues--changes, if any

9. Oral reading

10. Questions students ask

11. Questions tutor asks

Taping and Training

Each student was asked for and gave permission to tape record all sessions. In order to cut down on redundancy,

however, parts of practice periods were not tape recorded
when it was felt they would add nothing to the material
already gathered. The tapes were then analyzed to examine
the questions stated under Purpose in Chapter I.

Another tape recorder was used as a teaching tool when
tapes were made for student practice. Students were taught
to use the tape recorder in order to practice independently.
With some students, training in the use of the tape recorder
was quite time-consuming, but was an essential to later
proper drill. They had to learn to keep up with the spoken
text by tracking or pointing with their fingers and to stop
the tape when they found they were not keeping up with the
printed text. When they wished to work on small portions
at a time, they learned to rewind to the appropriate place
in order to retain meaning. A tape counter is of consider-
able help, but students who did not have access to a
recorder that had this useful mechanism needed to learn to
rewind carefully and find the correct place in the text.
For those students who found it too difficult to find the
place, short selections were put on separate tapes or wide
spaces of silence were left between selections. Inexpensive
tapes proved quite adequate for student use. They could be
erased and taped over as often as necessary.

In most circumstances taping was done with the student present, so that it would be clear to the student that the text in front of him or her was that which was being read aloud while being recorded. The tutor followed the text with a finger, reading slowly and as much in phrases as made sense and seemed natural. After the better readers had more experience with R-W-L and were able to accept that voice and text were reliably the same material, some of the taping was done when the student was not present in order to use the time together more efficiently.

Materials

Students were taken out of their classrooms for a period of about an hour each day. The tutoring was done at a table in a fairly large textbook and materials storage room. It was not feasible to control whatever additional reading instruction the students received during the balance of their school day, which varied from one to six hours, depending upon personal factors. To deprive them of other available instruction would have been unethical. It was quickly found that it was impossible, in any case, to ignore the phonics which students were receiving within their classrooms, which are emphasized in the Laubach Literacy materials published by the New Readers Press.

They had undoubtedly been exposed to phonics throughout
their reading instruction history, to the point of being
"phonicked to death," and phonics was strongly imbedded
into their global understanding of the reading process.

It was considered to be very important to maintain
good rapport with the students' primary teachers. There-
fore, as much effort as possible was made to act in the
true role of a tutor, helping students with the work their
teachers had assigned them and using the materials with
which they were familiar whenever reasonable. However,
there were times when these materials were not conducive
to reading while listening, or were clearly inappropriate
to the student's abilities. Other materials were then
substituted. Specific materials used with individual stu-
dents are described within the text of Chapter IV. Language
experience stories seemed appropriate for two of the
beginners. Students were encouraged to bring in materials,
and "easy" library books were sometimes used after ascer-
taining that the student did not mind using a book meant
for a young child. Occasionally books that were of interest
to the students were chosen in spite of reading levels,
keeping in mind that it was possible that too high a reading
level could make the students' job too difficult, inter-
fering with progress.

CHAPTER IV

THE STUDENTS WORK

Introductions

Fred

Fred was a gracious 50-year-old who had a steady job
working second shift in a factory doing a repetitious
physical task. He drove his wife to work every morning and
then came to school, usually arriving before I did. He had
a 19-year-old son who caused him some worry and a 17-year-
old daughter. He was very proud that she would soon go to
college. Fred took his family obligations very seriously,
which was the reason for several of his absences. His
mother lived nearby and he assumed responsibility for her,
too. When she became ill, she moved in with Fred's family
so they could care for her better.

When asked how he explained his inability to read Fred
said he had to drop out of school while in the eighth grade
after his father died to help support his sickly mother and
his siblings. He was about 14 at that time. When he was
still in school he only attended two or three days a week
because of chores he was required to do at home. When he
enlisted in the army he tried again to learn to read but
gave it up in order to be able to keep up with his other

training. Some of this information was later used for language experience stories.

Fred was recruited into the reading program by David, who works with him. He had been attending the community college for six months. While Fred appeared to be well-motivated to learn to read, his family obligations and his sense of responsibility to others repeatedly took precedence over reading. He was a capable handyman and derived much more satisfaction from being called on to help people with their problems than from his slow progress in reading. Fred assured me he had many abilities, and that his only failing was the reading. He had gone to mechanics' school and knew how to work on cars. He could also do carpentry and plumbing. Fred had potential.

> That's the only problem I have. As far as working and knowing how to do a job I can do just about anything anybody else can do. It's just that my reading is off a little. I'm not dumb.

When he worked at a reading task he seemed to give it his full attention. He studied at home when he was able to make the time for it, often with his wife's help. However, Fred was so beset with anxiety about reading and he was already so convinced that it was impossible for him to learn that it was difficult for him to absorb and retain what he learned. There was a continual atmosphere of

tightness, a tension about reading that undoubtedly back-
fired and interfered with his learning to read. It was as
though he used so much of himself fighting to protect
himself from failure that he sometimes could not absorb
some of the simplest ideas and he had little of himself
left for remembering new material. Bowren and Zintz said
"the rate of forgetting is increased by fear and anxiety"
(1977, p. 59). But once in a while Fred relaxed, forgot
his nervousness, and sailed right through his work. On
those days he was receptive and easily understood much of
the help given him.

In general, Fred's health was good, although he
occasionally had a cold or an "ache." He had obtained new
glasses the previous summer but he frequently complained
that focusing on print for extended periods made his eyes
water. He had his eyes re-examined shortly after we began
to meet and, many weeks later, came in with new glasses.

Tammy

Tammy, 22 years old, lived with her mother, her sister,
her sister's children, and her own 4-year-old son and 16-
month-old daughter. Later in the semester her 81-year-old
grandmother, who was "dying real slow" moved in with the
family, too. Tammy was a welfare recipient and her

attendance at school was dependent on her receipt of bus tickets to get to school and whatever baby-sitting arrangements she could make.

Tammy had attended school until the twelfth grade, when she became pregnant. Her mother had told her, however, that the work she did in twelfth grade was more like sixth grade work. She said her reading had been better when she was in school, but she had forgotten a lot.

Tammy had started working on her reading and math at the community college three weeks previously. Her motivation was high and she worked hard with me. Her mother frequently listened to her read at home.

Initially her attendance was regular, but soon it became sporadic. The first time she was absent for two weeks. She said her child had the flu and then she got it. Her health appeared to be generally good, however. She also mentioned that she was mad about something, but didn't want to discuss it. Two weeks later Tammy was out again, this time for three weeks. I asked her teacher several times to call to find out why she was absent and finally I spoke to the director. He called and told Tammy she would be dropped if she didn't return. She returned the next Monday. At first she said her mother was sick, but then

told me that her sister had stolen her bus tickets and she

was so angry she had resolved never to return to school.

She sometimes had baby-sitting problems. There were

other, somewhat blurry excuses, including a trip to court

and the possible removal of her two children from the home.

She was again absent from April 11 until May 22, citing

family and baby-sitting problems and problems with her

boy-friend. As she put it, "Things went down in my house

and I stayed home for a while."

Tammy often came to school without breakfast, enjoying

the hot chocolate and cookies or whatever I provided each

day or stopping at the snack machines before meeting with

me. On three separate occasions I thought I smelled

alcohol on her breath, although we never discussed this.

Tammy seemed ill at ease because the tape recorder was

on throughout our lessons. She must have felt very

vulnerable.

David

David was 38 years old when we worked together. He

was employed in a factory on the second shift. His wife

had "some college," was a supervisor of secretaries and

very supportive of her husband. David has two sons, then

aged 17 and 18. He came from a family of 14 children,

including two pairs of twins. He had to help support the

family by working with his father on the farm, so he had missed a lot of school.

He had been around the community college "about five years--about six." When I asked him why he had not made more progress in those years he cited teachers who just came for the pay check and also said that his attendance had not been regular, usually about twice a week.

David now had a five-year plan for getting his G.E.D., after which he hoped to go to college for another five years. ("I can go fishing after I get my degree.") He knew that if children take 12 years to get an education he needed to give himself enough time.

He wanted to learn to run the machine he worked on in the factory and was being taught to do so by the woman who ran it on his shift. She was also teaching David to read the words in the operating manual. He wanted to photocopy the manual so he could take it home and learn to read it. He would have to take a test to get the job running the machine. After he had that job he wanted to get into machine maintenance, which would put him in a considerably higher salary bracket. He would need to learn to tear down and repair the machine in order to get that promotion.

David had some slight health problems, which he described as an ulcer or pancreatitis. He did not miss

school for health reasons, however. I had to warn him once not to come if he was catching the flu or he would have been there. When he was absent one week visiting his brother who had cancer, he had prepared nine pages to read to me when he returned--about the amount we would have covered together. We discussed his vision and he said he'd had his eyes examined recently and didn't need glasses.

As David was my third and last student each day we usually worked overtime, sometimes up to two hours instead of just one. His motivation was so high and his understanding so good there was no holding him back.

Thelma

Thelma was 60 years old when we worked together. Her roots are in Ohio. She lived in an apartment by herself. When she was young she had had epilepsy and missed a considerable amount of school. She felt she had been pushed a lot. She spoke, however, as though it was her sister who managed her life. At another time she told me teachers know better than she what is best for her. When her mother died she had quit school, but later she went back to night school for a while.

She had been told that the drugs given her to control her seizures damaged her brain and that scar tissue was

evident in a brain scan. Thelma was quite worried about her ability to learn and retain information. I found, however, that she had good retention and comprehension of the details in her reading material.

Thelma had entered the school seven months previously. She read material on a "third" or "fourth" grade vocabulary level, sometimes even better. She had high anxiety and told me she was hyperactive. I told her I liked hyperactive people, as they kept me on my toes. She became quite emotional about her inability to read at times. Once tears streamed down her face as she said, "Here I am, a great big woman, reading this baby stuff." It was not easy to keep Thelma relaxed. Sometimes we talked as much as we worked on reading.

She was generally healthy. Her only absence was a two-week trip to Ohio to visit family. I could only work with Thelma when one of the original three students was absent and I alternated between her and Rosa as fairly as possible. Her vision was satisfactory, but there were unanswered questions about her hearing. Her teacher and I both encouraged Thelma to have her hearing tested, but she refused. It may be that there was not anything wrong with her hearing, but that she simply had never learned to hear or to speak endings. She may have had an attentional

deficit in that area. Her dialect differed noticeably from the local southern drawl. This will be discussed in more detail later.

In spite of the auditory problem Thelma's teacher insisted on using a phonic approach to teaching her reading. The teacher dictated lists of similar spelling words which Thelma could not differentiate among and then gave her poor grades. This distressed Thelma greatly and did not help her self-concept at all. Her teacher asked me once if I thought Thelma was retarded. I had no doubt that Thelma has at least average intelligence.

It was difficult to open Thelma to new ideas, but she evidently needed this defense. She once said,

> And you could talk till you're blue and black in the face and try to explain to me, unless it gets down in a single, simple way, to explain it. And that's what my sister has to do. That's what my mother had to do. Go all around the world to explain something to me so I could understand.

I did find resistance to teaching, but I would not have agreed with her sister. I felt Thelma needed to live with the consequences of her decisions. Thelma fit very well into Fay's description of some illiterates as quoted by Bowren and Zintz (1977):

> To avoid detection, the illiterate has usually become socially conservative, very fearful of change and afraid of the unknown. Thus, tradition and mores may be more important to him than reason in governing his

actions. He seldom evaluates any traditional expecta-
tion by rationality. Past frustration and failure
have usually taught him in no uncertain terms that
survival depends on his conformity with the traditions
and demands of his society. Having thus defined his
role as an adult in that society, he participates
largely to the extent of conforming to that role as he
sees it, often to the extent of saying what he feels
others expect of him, and suppressing his real
feelings. (pp. 42-43)

Twice Thelma invited me to go to religious "revivals"
with her.

Rosa

Rosa was a sociable 41-year-old mother of three and
while we worked together she became a grandmother of one.
Her 16-year-old daughter, who Rosa said lived with a drug
pusher, bestowed grandparenthood upon her. Her sons were
aged 6 and 14. Her husband worked as a janitor in a school.
Rosa had been an extremely premature baby and had spent
much time in an incubator. She also described having had a
problem as a child which appears to have been seizures.

Rosa had come to the United States from Puerto Rico
when she was 12 years old. She said she could read "a
little bit" in Puerto Rico but could not learn to read at
all in the new language. After she came to the United
States she said she had a nervous breakdown, and I inferred
that she felt that her inability to read was a part of the
cause. She said doctors had told her mother she would never
be able to learn.

In her work on reading she had tremendous determination, patience, and persistence. She was totally cooperative and she gave the appearance of having a very high motivation to learn, but she seemed almost incapable of retaining any lesson for more than a few seconds. One day, when I became discouraged and told her I could not teach her unless she remembered the words, I looked up and saw tears rolling down her cheeks. I quickly told her that we would keep on trying anyway and tried always to be positive thereafter.

She was concerned when her children called her "very dumb." She took pride in the little she could read and write. Her husband was evidently not always supportive. When she lost her wallet he told her she was going crazy. This affected her enough for her to repeat it to me and we discussed the normalcy of losing things. However, her whole family helped her with her reading.

Rosa appeared to be healthy and she was seldom absent. At one point she had a doctor's appointment and reported she had been told her health was good. I only saw her on days when other students were absent, alternating with Thelma. Whenever I had time for her, she was present. Her eyes had been examined a week before we first met. On February 27th she came in wearing new glasses and said things were much clearer. While I had questions about her

auditory discrimination, I did not have any reports on her hearing. I believed there was a longer than usual delay between hearing and thinking, an assimilation-response time most students cope with more quickly than Rosa could. Twice Rosa brought in application forms to apply for jobs which she could not fill out herself. I learned then that she had spent three years in a factory inspecting coats for flaws before her marriage. She had also done housework for other people.

I did not have any difficulty with materials for Rosa because her family and her teacher supplied her with books and word lists to work on, which she asked me to help her with. A woman in her church also worked with her one after-noon a week on reading.

<div align="center">The Students Work</div>

Fred

The Beginning

At our first meeting on January 24th I encouraged Fred to choose a selection he felt confident to read aloud. The prospect of reading to a strange person and displaying his minimal skills must have been traumatic. While he had "worked on" almost the entire Laubach Way to Reading, Skill Book 1 (Laubach, Kirk, & Laubach, 1977), as evidenced by

the many pencil dots under the words on every page, Fred

very prudently decided to turn to the first story in the

book to demonstrate his reading ability. The following is

a transcript of his first reading:

F: You want me to read it to you? This is a bird.
    This is a cup. This is a dish. This is a fish.
    This is a girl. This is a hand. The girl (hand
    is) bird.
M: That doesn't make sense, does it? Let's try again.
F: The girl's (h-a- ha- is) bird.
F: Go on. Just go on.
F: (This) girl's (hand) --
M: Well, it's not <u>hand</u>. That word is <u>has</u>. Let's read
    the top line.
F: (This) girl --
M: Is that <u>this</u>?
F: The girl ha-
M: O.K.
F: (This) girl --
M: Is that <u>this</u>?
F: The girl ha- a (hand. c -a -, c-u-o. /p/ /p/
    --hand).
M: <u>Cup</u>.
F: <u>Cup</u>.
M: (Pointing at picture.) Here it is. Over here.
    See the cup?
F: Yeh. Cup. The girls ha- a /h/
M: Look over at the picture.
F: The girl ha- (this) cup.
M: That's cup. Now the next one.
F: The girl ha- (an) a
M: Look at the picture.
F: Dish. The girls ha- (hand) a fish.
M: No. It's not <u>hand</u>. <u>Hand</u> begins with an h-a-.
    See. There's a hand. H-a-n-d. But this is h-a-s,
    <u>has</u>.
F: <u>Has</u> a fish.
M: O.K.
F: The girl ha- (hand, girl).
M: <u>Has</u>
F: -has -
M: What's that?
F: -a bird in (the)

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M:  in -- ?
F:  in -
M:  -in her -?
F:  in her hand
M:  O.K.
F:  The girls ha- a cup in (the) -
M:  In her -
F:  In her hand.  The girl ha- a (/n/, b-)
M:  That's a d.
F:  D-i-s-h, (hand).
M:  Look over there.
F:  -a dish in (the) hand.
M:  in her -
F:  in her hand  The girl ha- a fish in her hand.
M:  Good.  You got 'her' that time.  You remembered.
    O.K.  What's that word?
F:  Ha-, her.  Her.
M:  Her.
F:  Her.
M:  That one?
F:  Her.
```

For the short time he could concentrate, Fred did very well. I question whether he hadn't mostly memorized even the first part however, as he later could only read two of the words in isolation. On the next few lines he fell apart. Nonetheless, Fred's anxieties were a part of his reading, and they came through vividly. What was learned was that Fred's anxieties stood in the way of his learning to read, and that his concentration span was short. Abrams describes this in <u>Stress and Reading Difficulties</u> when he says:

> (Students) may bring so much conflict to the reading situation that they cannot be receptive even in the best of circumstances. Still other (students) bring so much anxiety to the learning situation that it becomes almost impossible for them to focus their

> attention on the teacher for more than a short period
> of time. (Gentile & McMillan, 1987, p. v.)

Fred recognized this one day when he said: "When you try to pronounce a word that don't come it look like I just gets carried away; like I just want to give up right then, you know."

During our first few sessions Fred's reading indicated that he did have a few reading skills. He knew that words are separated by spaces. He had a fair recognition of the letters of the alphabet, sometimes spelling words aloud to help in retrieval, to reassure himself that a word was correct, or to ingrain the word into his memory. He could self-correct on reading most of the letters. The Laubach Method (Laubach, 1960), which he had been working with for six months, is based on phonics. He seemed to have absorbed the concept that letters have distinguishable sounds, but was almost totally unable to put sounds together to produce words. Sometimes Fred called an entirely unrelated word after carefully spelling and attempting to sound the letters which made up the word.

Fred had not formed the habit of looking left-to-right consistently. He was also uncertain about what was the beginning or ending of a word, or at least he verbalized these terms incorrectly at times and frequently tried to

begin a word with the final letter sound. He confused the definitions of "letter" and "word" some of the time in usage. When asked to read words out of context his recall was not nearly as good as with continuous text, indicating that he relied heavily on either context or memory. At times I sensed that the fact that the concept that reading is a means of communication wasn't completely accepted by Fred.

I asked Fred to read the first hundred words of Fry's Instant Word List (Fry, 1980). In all, Fred recognized the following 18 words fully: the, and, a, to, or, by, up, no, is, he, on, with, I, at, this, do, how, many, look, my. He came close on four more, for, his, an, she, and recognized either the initial or final sounds on 16 others. I had told Fred that these words comprise half of all written material in English. He asked if he could have a copy of the list to study. Because we were working in real life, Fred's need and motivation were more important than any test-retest situation. I gave him the list, which he said he would work on with his teacher.

Working with R-W-L

Almost predictably, Fred had more self-confidence and his reading was much improved after he had listened to the same selection on the tape several times using R-W-L. On

subsequent days, after practicing with R-W-L, his reading also started out quite well, but in the middle of a passage --often when he could not recognize a word--he would again lose all sense of what he was doing, as he did in our first meeting. I infer that this was due to increasing tensions and lack of self-confidence.

I decided that more meaningful material might increase Fred's involvement with reading. Making use of some of his family background, which he had previously told me, I wrote a language experience story. He did well on this after using R-W-L about five times. However, he became concerned when he forgot some of it later. We continued working on the parts that gave him trouble until he could read it more reliably.

It was about this time that I discovered that Fred could not read the keys on the tape recorder. Evidently, I had been pushing the keys for him when we worked together. This had been slowing down his progress, as he had been unable to use the tape recorder to practice with at home. We spent considerable time rehearsing Play, Stop, Rew. and F.F. until I was sure he could use them alone.

One day we spent the entire time on the words get and got. I involved R-W-L by creating an extensive numbered list of the two words, matching the words with numbers on

the tape. Fred could not remember the difference consistently at the end of the hour, in spite of the fact that I could see that he was trying with his whole self. Fred said: "I don't give up. I try to stay with it as much as I can."

The same day he expressed his problem thus:

It look like I can't get my words--like I can't get my words like I want to. It look like I'm rushing myself, I guess. I just -- My wife tell me, "Fred, you got to take your time. You gotta stop your reading" -- I like to read too fast.

He understood his difficulty, but was unable to correct it. Yet I felt that verbalization of the problem was a step in the right direction.

Fred added use of context to his word analysis skills of spelling and voicing initial sounds, by using R-W-L. But if he voiced the final sound of a word first, recognition became impossible. Fred was not accustomed to using context because of his years of stop-and-go reading attempts. He needed encouragement to hold what he had already read in his mind to help him move along. I frequently repeated what he had already read to cue a difficult word, even though it might come from his memory of context rather than text itself. When he made a mistake I asked him to check by using initial consonant clues or context.

One day I lost patience with Fred and told him he had
not been working hard enough. The next time we met he read
exceptionally well, his best to date. When he made a
little mistake he got upset. He said: "I went over this
stuff I'll bet you a hundred times yesterday. I went over
it until my eyes started running water." There was no
doubt about Fred's motivation, nor that with sufficient
practice he could do very well. He was beginning to under-
stand this, and to take responsibility for his learning
upon himself. It had taken my becoming quite stern to
impress it upon him.

Fred sometimes feigned helplessness, saying, "I can't."
But if help was not forthcoming, with encouragement he
worked harder and usually read the word that was giving him
difficulty. He was also concerned about why the words
"leave him." He asked if he were "too pressed." This,
again, was a step toward verbalizing understanding and
acceptance.

At other times he made errors when his attention
wavered. Once when I asked him why he had reversed b and d
he said he had been looking at something else. Another
time I asked him why he reversed b and d and he reviewed
that the b faces this way > and the d faces this way <,
recognizing that he had "looked at them wrong." Having

reiterated the rule, he looked more carefully and did not make any more mistakes until the last one, when his attention wavered. After a break he read them all correctly. He was able to write them correctly from dictation.

Sometimes the only reason I could find for Fred's errors were that he builds blocks when he first makes a mistake. His persistent confusion of Ed and Glenn are an example. His reasoning appeared to be "I had trouble with Ed, so Glenn must be Ed and Ed must be Glenn." This kind of block may have been caused by his anxiety and is difficult to get over. We focused on the individual letters of the words again and again until he had enough faith in himself to say the words correctly with consistency.

Adjournment

I decided to move Fred to the Hip Reader (Ruchlis, 1969), which contained not only word families but contrasting words as mat-man, and cat-cap-cup-car. I believe having him work in the Hip Reader (Ruchlis, 1969) was instrumental in helping Fred sharpen his skill in focusing on other than initial sounds. The closeness of spellings prevented memorization, requiring instead finer discriminations. In addition, the primarily three-letter words made the job less complex for Fred than some of the longer

words in his experience stories, although we continued going back to those, as well.

As time went on he also learned to use final and medial letters on longer words, but by the time we finished working together this was not yet consistent. We spent much time having Fred focus on all the letters of words. Fred said he had to see certain letters in order to remember a word. When I asked him how he would distinguish _properly_ from _pronounce_ he noted that _properly_ has two _p's_ and a _y_. Another time he said he used the n-c-e and the l-y to distinguish _pronounce_ from _properly_.

When he focused on initial and final sounds Fred could sometimes remember a word without working on the medial letters. For example, when I said /k/ /s/, Fred remembered _cause_. When I said /h/ /p/, he remembered _help_.

He had begun to self-correct on beginning-ending errors, and I recognized a definite improvement on letter sounds in general. I also asked Fred to write word families, so he might begin to put his mental knowledge into concrete form. In addition, we worked on endings, such as _fish_, _fisher_, _fisherman_, _fishing_, both with and without a tape, to help him look at whole words, not just beginnings.

By April 2nd we had covered several stories in Laubach
Skill Book 1 (Laubach, Kirk, & Laubach, 1977), half a dozen
language experience stories, and about 20 pages in the Hip
Reader (Ruchlis, 1969). At this point Fred had begun
to use the sounds of the letters to work out and remember
words. He was also using context more, and was establishing
a broader sight vocabulary. He had made a big jump toward
better comprehension of the reading process. I felt Fred
had the potential to continue improving his reading because
of his determination and perseverence, if he would only
learn to be patient with himself. Even here, determination
was helping him make inroads to self-acceptance.

On April 17th I read part of Martin Luther King (Peck,
1971) to Fred. He read along where he recognized words.
On April 30th I gave him a taped book about motorcycles
(Radlauer, 1978) to listen to and read along with. When he
found only the first two chapters of the book had been
taped he was interested enough to have a classmate read the
rest to him.

When Fred realized our time together was coming to an
end, his reading deteriorated. He appeared to be reverting
to helplessness, which was in keeping with the rest of his
reading behavior and with his low self-concept as a
learner.

Nonetheless, when I presented him with the Fry List
(Fry, 1980) to "assess his growth," he was able to read 35
words, compared with the original 18. I believe he could
have done better. I had him reread old language experience
stories. He remembered quite a bit, missing between five
and ten percent of the words. He read words in context
he still could not read in isolation. He occasionally
persisted in trying to start words with their final letters,
but he used initial sounds most of the time by now. We
reviewed some of the earlier Laubach Skill Book 1 (Laubach,
Kirk, & Laubach, 1977) stories, which he read quite well.
I also asked him to read a Dolch Word List (Dolch, 1941),
but stopped because he did poorly and was apparently
totally "frozen" after a while, not recognizing words I
was sure he knew. He denied that he felt it was a testing
situation, but his responses indicated he was aware of what
I was doing.

Fred never stopped trying in spite of his slow
progress. If work alone could have done it, Fred would be
an excellent reader.

The following was one of Fred's last readings:

F: My Job. I have
M: I what?
F: I ru- run the machine and I make New-port Ciga-
    rettes. We ?? We - w-e
M: That's right.

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F:  We like
M:  We what?
F:  We run
M:  No
F:  We make 100s and we make 85s.  First we
M:  First -
F:  - thing you do is to run -
M:  /ch/
F:  - is to check your meter and /s/ /p/ ahh-
M:  Beings with an r
F:  R-u-n
M:  Check your meter and
F:  Run it back to zero.  You check your stamps.  Then
    you
M:  Then?
F:  Then -
M:  It's the same as this.
F:  -- R-o-u-r
M:  Y-o-u-r
F:  /??/    --
M:  What, read this one again.
F:  You check your stamps.
M:  What's that word?
F:  Your.  Then your /sets/.
M:  Begins with an l.
F:  /??/
M:  Begins with an l.
F:  /le-/ labels
M:  Good.
F:  Then you check your /ss/ stamps.
M:  Begins with an /f/
F:  /??/  foil.  Then you check your cellophane.
M:  Very good.  Very good.
```

Tammy

The Beginning

When our sessions began, Tammy was working in The Laubach Way to Reading, Skill Book 1 (Laubach, Kirk, & Laubach, 1977), although I quickly discovered that she was capable of reading at a "second" to "third" grade level.

She read each story well from page 3 through page 31,
missing only the following words: woman, for which she
said lady, olive, which she couldn't pronounce. She
missed the names Cal and Fran, mostly because they were
unfamiliar. In addition, she used such black-English
features as omitting the -s endings and saying ran for
runs. She self-corrected other errors when they were
pointed out to her, so in most instances I attributed them
either to nervousness or inattention.

Tammy asked me to help her with her math and read the
following from her math book a few days after we began
working together. (Underlined words were given her.
Parentheses indicate incorrect attempts. Slash marks =
/sounds like/):

T: You probably noticed (this) that they are all four
    digit number(s), but didn't you notice that all
    four numbers are made (matched?), are made up of
    the (sound) same digits--1, 2, 3 and 4? The digit
    s are the (sound) same but each number has a
    (difficult) different (valid) value. (They, is,
    that, they) This is be(come) -cause the (different)
    digits /digint? are in (diff-, I mean, --)
    different (/play/, um, mm, /playet/) places. In
    other words, each (difficult) digit (digint) in a
    number has a (/pl-/, /play/, um, I don't know.)
M: You got that word before.
T: (/Plee/, /prah/,) Oh, I can't say that.
M: That's all right. Don't, --
T: Place.
M: Very good.
T: /Varal/
M: Value.
T: Value. Value.

While she used initial letters and syllables quite well, she jumped into the second syllable of a word too quickly. She did not use context very well. She had a problem pronouncing <u>digit</u>, even after I had said it three times. It was clearly not yet in her vocabulary, while the word <u>value</u> evidently was.

Tammy had been studying the Dolch Word List (Dolch, 1941) with her teacher. I asked her to read the Fry List (Fry, 1980) for me. Of the first 100 words she recognized all but eight words, self-correcting on 12 others. She made errors in adding an <u>-s</u> to two words. Of the next 50 words, Tammy missed 13 and self-corrected on six others. When it became clear that her tension was mounting we stopped. Since this list had no context, I believe she actually could have recognized more than she could call "cold," had they had text around them. When I casually asked her to scan the list for additional words she read several others into the third and fourth hundred with enthusiasm. She was more relaxed after the pressure was removed, recognizing that she was no longer in a "test" situation.

<u>Working with R-W-L</u>

There was an immediate improvement in the fluency of her reading of <u>City Living</u> (Laubach, Kirk, & Laubach, 1977),

which was the reader which accompanies Laubach's Skill Book 2 (Laubach, Kirk, & Laubach, 1975) when I had Tammy listen to the text three times before allowing her to read. The next time I had her use R-W-L, however, I felt she read somewhat haltingly even after listening to the material half a dozen times, having first reviewed the words that might have proven difficult in isolation. Approximately three words per page gave her trouble. This could just have been a bad day for her. Despite this, Tammy verbalized that she felt her reading had improved. The next time we worked with R-W-L she said her reading was "kinda gew-gaw" without practice and "all right" after listening three times.

A reason Tammy may have appeared ill at ease much of the time could have been due to the tape recording of our lessons. I explained to her very carefully that tape recording our lessons was my way of taking notes for my work at the university. I promised her that nothing we talked about would ever hurt her in any way, and I would be the only one to listen to the tapes. I hoped she would learn to ignore the tape recorder.

Tammy had difficulty following the taped text when she worked by herself so I encouraged her to use the pause button more. I also told her it was all right to read

until she came to a word she did not know and then use the tape. While she was listening she could check up on her preceding reading. It was a compromise, but I wanted to nudge her into recognizing the value in listening.

We had a continuing debate as to whether she used the tapes enough on her own. At times she read to her mother and would read well for me thereafter, but I kept pushing for greater fluency. Tammy might have achieved this by practicing until she felt confident, but with her unstable home situation it is gratifying that she was able to concentrate enough to work at home at all. There were days when it was very difficult for her to be attentive. In addition, I believe self-consciousness about her speech interfered with fluency.

On March 15th I was pleased when I heard more use of context and smoother reading. Meaning was leading the text, not words. Tammy agreed that she was reading beautifully. That day it was hard to get her to stop reading. When I asked her questions about the context, however, she needed to go over the text again before she remembered details. She said she was not learning fast enough. She also told me that she could remember the hard words when she heard them on the tape. I again encouraged

her to underline those words. I reminded her not to be in a hurry, that learning cannot be rushed.

I had Tammy read from <u>Jonathan Livingston Seagull</u> (Bach, 1970) but was afraid that the number of difficult words might not be good for her self-confidence. I had hoped the story would challenge her, as it has other students. Instead, we worked on <u>New Ways</u> (Laubach & Kirk, 1968), a book at a higher reading level than the one her teacher had given her.

On March 27th Tammy had finished <u>New Ways</u> (Laubach & Kirk, 1968), so I asked her to read the word list in the back of the book. Predictably, she did not do as well with the words in isolation as she had when they were surrounded by context.

On April 2nd Tammy mentioned that her 81-year-old grandmother had come to live with her family. Tammy was quite distracted and read poorly. After listening to the tape several times she seemed calmer and read more fluently until she again lost the sense of the story. To help her concentration I suggested she visualize the story or, as she interpreted it, get a picture in her mind to "see what's happening."

<u>Adjournment</u>

Tammy's total attendance was about 35%. April 11th was our last meeting. Tammy still felt she did not need to

listen to tapes before reading, but again agreed to,

improving her efforts thereby. She had listened to this

section of the Laubach book which helped one study for a

driver's license (Joyce, 1973) three times.

T: (What - they - O,K Why don't) - Why do people
    (cause,) have wrecks? Some people say wrecks
    happen because of laws. (They laws, um -) They
    say laws are not the same in all states. Most
    states' laws (are not, are not,) are the same,
    but some laws are not the same. It (man, it must,
    it must) -
M: M-a-y.
T: (Might. Might. Ah, shucks! What, might, many,
    it, many -)
M: Many is m-a-n-y. This is m-a-y. -- what's d-a-y?
T: Today.
M: What's m-a-y?
T: (?)
M: What's s-a-y?
T: Say.
M: What's p-a-y?
T: Pay
M: And what's m-a-y?
T: May. -- It may be o.k. to drive sixty-five miles
    an hour in Texas. To travel sixty-five miles an
    hour in other states - (Man, I got that word again!
    Day, say, pay -) may be too fast. There are some
    small changes in laws (become, become, became
    other, became other -)
M: Be-/k/ -
T: Because. - (because other) -
M: - because -
T: (because off)
M: No. O-f
T: - Of some (trucks --)
M: Traffic.
T: - traffic (needed -)
M: - traffic -
T: /new/
M: N-e-e-d- s. Now look at it carefully. You have
    the right word, but you didn't put the s on it
    right.
T: (Nearly)

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M:  N-e-e-d.  N-e-e-d.  It may be - There are small
    changes in laws because of some traffic -
T:  (Needed)
M:  Need -
T:  (Needed)
M:  Need - s.
T:  - needs.  Laws (don't,) do not cause wrecks.
    Drivers, (cars) cause wrecks.
M:  Drivers -
T:  - Cause wrecks.
```

David

The Beginning

It appeared that David had all the requirements for improving his reading when we began working together. He was already familiar with R-W-L. His determination to read was remarkably strong and any word he had difficulty with drew his concentration until he felt he could remember it. His home life appeared to be well in order and did not distract him except when his twin brother became ill.

His principal word attack method was to spell a word several times, either orally or in writing. I am not sure what cues he used to remember the words but it was apparently without formal or conscious use of phonics. He said that when he spelled a word he could hear it. Could this have been his innate knowledge of phonics? David had a tendency to guess at a word too quickly, using only a few clues, rather than concentrating long enough to read it carefully. He did look for familiar parts of words and,

when I told him words or when he heard them on tape, he then made some effort to "sound out" the words, using the aural cues within the spoken words themselves. But many of his attempts to use phonics independently confused and sometimes paralyzed him. He had memorized that an f makes a /fuh/ sound instead of /fff/, that g says /guh/ instead of /g-/ or /jjj/, etc. Such unfortunate misunderstandings only increased the difficulty of his learning to read.

On January 26th I asked him to work on the first two pages of the Reading for Understanding Placement Test (Thurstone, 1963), which is the test given at the community college if the aim is to get into the G.E.D. program. Despite inability to read many words, he used the context so well that he answered almost all the multiple-choice questions on the first two pages correctly. He read and reread the text and the choices until he had gained enough of the sense to venture a guess. I did not time him. He was fully aware that reading is a means of communication.

On the Fry List (Fry, 1980) David missed only four of the first 100 words, omitting one. He self-corrected on 22 words. He conceded that he "wasn't looking at them good" to explain so many false starts. He left off the final s from two additional words and spelled five words before attempting to read them. David expected me to give him the

list to study, but I told him he would learn all the words

eventually by meeting them over and over in his reading.

Working with R-W-L

I thought David might enjoy reading <u>Jonathan Livingston</u>

<u>Seagull</u> (Bach, 1970), and used it to introduce him to

reading while listening. David's finger lagged behind the

tape initially while reading <u>Jonathan Livingston Seagull</u>,

but after five or six practice runs he said he could keep

up. The following was his first example of reading after

using R-W-L:

```
D:   It was -uh- morning, and the new sun sparked gold
     across the chum -
M:   No.
D:   Uh, ripple, rips -
M:   Ripple- s
D:   -ripples of a /guh/, /j/ -
M:   Gentle.
D:   -Gentle sea
M:   Does it look like gentlemen?
D:   Mm, hmm.
M:   All right.
D:   Gentle sea.  A mile from shore a fishing boat chums
     the water and the word for breakfast flashed -
M:   Flock.
D:   -flock -
M:   A flock of birds.  Flock.
D:   -flock.  That's flock, right?
M:   Yes.
D:   Flock.  /Birds/
M:   - and the word for breakfast flock
D:   /??/  What's that word?
M:   Flashed.
D:   -flashed through the air till a /cool/-
M:   /cr-/
D:   /Let's see/ --
M:   /cr-ow/
D:   -crowd of a thousand seagulls came to dive
```

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M:  -dodge
D:  -dodge and feed -
M:  And what?
D:  Feel
M:  Spell it.
D:  Fits.  That's fits.
M:  Where is fits?  F-i-g-h-t?
D:  F-i-g-h-t.  Fight.  F-i-g-h-t.  Fish.  Fit.
    That'll be bits right there.
M:  Yeah.  They came to dodge and /f/-
D:  Fight.  That's fight.  -fight for bits of food.
    It was among-
M:  Another.
D:  -another day.
M:  busy -
D:  - another busy day beginning.  But was-
M:  -way -
D:  - way off alone, alone.  Out by himself by
M:  be-
D:  beyond the boat, the shore -
M:  -the boat -
D:  the boat and the shore Jonathan /Lunthal/ -
M:  What's his name?
D:  Jonathan /Linifal?/
M:  Livingston
D:  /Livisen/
M:  Livingston
D:  /Livvison/
M:  Say "living."
D:  Living.
M:  -ston
D:  ston
M:  Living - ston
D:  /Livinthon./  Jonathan Livinthon /S-s-s/ s-e-a-
M:  What kind of bird is he?
D:  seagull.  - Seagull was practicin' -
M:  Good!
D:  -a hundred feet in the sky.
```

David's keen memory helped him with several words he
would otherwise have forgotten. He tended to lean heavily
on memory and initial consonants rather than on all the
print cues. It was a constant task to remind him to
develop the skills which would lead to more independent

reading. His indomitable self-confidence sometimes stood in the way of greater effort.

David expressed himself well, although his vocabulary was limited by his lack of exposure to text. His listening comprehension was quite a bit better than his speaking vocabulary. Several times he affirmed that listening to text over and over helped him comprehend much better than working out words. He subsequently also said he felt his thinking and speaking improved because of the repetition and improved comprehension.

I encouraged him to visualize scenes to retain meanings better, to stop at the end of each paragraph and ask himself what he had just read. By visualizing is meant listening to the text carefully enough to imagine what the text is describing, making "pictures in the mind" (Sinatra, 1986). I asked him to use the "extra" part of his brain to do this. Bowren and Zintz (1977) described this as a facet of reaction, "the ability to recreate sensory images" (p. 75). I wanted David to be emotionally involved with the story, not for comprehension purposes alone, but to motivate him to want to continue reading, also. He later told me the scenes gradually took form with repetition, not on first contact.

On February 1st David said he had practiced page 12 in
Jonathan Livingston Seagull (Bach, 1970). If he had, he
did not appear to have been paying attention. Out of the
first 21 words he needed help with 11. He said he felt
listening two more times would be enough for him to do
better. I suggested 20. We worked on the hard words
intensively and went over and over the material. At first
we read together. Finally I stopped, letting David con-
tinue alone. He worked "with fierce concentration," as
Jonathan had worked on learning to fly. It was his best
reading to date. He went beyond what we had practiced,
much improved over his initial reading. We both agreed
he was reading better than he ever had in his whole life.
Having worked on the difficult words and total concentration
seemed to be the keys to his improvement. On the unpracticed
material concentration and self-confidence were apparently
the principal difference.

On February 2nd, after announcing that he had "just
burned them words up" while practicing, he said he was
losing his mental blocks. Previously he had told himself
he didn't recognize some of the most common words. He said
that now he listened to himself and the words just came to
him. He had become even more conscious of the possibilities

of using context to predict what would follow. He further

explained the disappearance of his blocks by saying:

> Well, I - after I saw you helping me and, and uh, I
> said if I want to get better I really gotta help
> myself, too. You know. I just study harder. I just
> read. You know. Anything I can get my hands on I
> read.

And later:

> Once I see these word, you know what I do now? If I
> be riding along or something, if I see that word, I
> know it. On a truck or anywhere. On a building. I
> get so I watch road signs and stuff like that, you
> know? If I see that word, I done already put it in my
> head. I can remember it. It flash back to me just
> like that, you know.

Besides reading the Bible, David read what he could of

the newspaper. He was delighted when he recognized some of

the words he had learned while working in <u>Jonathan Livingston

Seagull</u> (Bach, 1970). One day he brought in a newspaper

article he had prepared to read to me without any help. He

read it with only three errors, but told me he could have

done better. He also said he recognized many of the words

from <u>Jonathan</u> in his regular classwork. He wanted to read

books, but had difficulty finding them on his reading level.

He bought in <u>Midnight, The Champion Bucking Horse</u> by Savitt

(1974), which we took turns reading to each other throughout

the ensuing weeks.

In addition, David read and reread the "easy" books he

had collected at home to review what he already knew. As

he put it, "I know they got easy words that makes them big words." At work he memorized the signs, such as "Danger" and "High Voltage," as well as the written names for all of the parts of the machine he worked on. He "relaxed" on his breaks at work by studying <u>Jonathan Livingston Seagull</u>, which he carried in his pocket wherever he went. When his second shift ended at 12:30 a.m., he sometimes worked with the tape recorder when he got home until 3 or 4 in the morning, literally wearing out the pages.

He had discovered that each time he reread parts of the Book of John in the Bible he got new insights into the meanings. Consequently, he valued the repetition. As he put it:

> The more I read it, the more I understood it. And it's not a question of the words, you know. It's a question of the meanings. -- I guess the more anybody reads anything, the better they understand it.

We worked on increasing his reading speed using a selection I taped at a rapid pace, having David attempt to follow. He found that he could read much faster that session.

We gradually worked toward David's being able to decide on the length of his own assignments, although at first he overestimated his abilities. This was an important step for David in asserting and maintaining his independence. His primary goal was to help himself.

I know I need to do it and I know I'm gonna do it for
myself. And I'm gonna do it. I be helping myself. I
need all the help from myself.

One of our goals was to increase his insight into his
mistakes better in order to avoid them. Consequently, I
frequently asked him to explain his reasoning when he erred.
In addition, I read to him from Inner Tennis: Playing the
Game, by W. Tim Gallway (1976), which helps one see how to
analyze one's work, be it tennis or reading.

David's ability to self-analyze helped me gain a better
understanding of why some students make reversals. When he
spelled very e-v-r-y he said he looked at the -e before the
-v, but could not explain why. He resolved to look more
carefully. Another time when he reversed he explained that
his eyes had stopped at the end of the word, "-and when I
backed up and I spelled it, then I got it like that." He
felt he was going too fast, that he had gotten ahead of
himself. Yet another time he said: "I read 'em backwards.
I don't see 'em backwards. I be reading them backwards."

David was able, by analogy, to apply the story of
Jonathan learning to fly to his learning to read.

    M: Tell me what you learned while you were working on
        this.
    D: I learned that Jonathan Seagull, he was a seagull.
        But he don't want to be. He say he don't have to
        be like the other seagull, you know. Because he
        learned to fly. He learned to practice. And he
        found himself. He set a new world record. And he

say he don't have to be ignorant, like, you know,
the rest of the gulls. And he wondered how much
more he could learn, you know. And, uh, he went
on and set a new world record for seagulls.

M: Yes.

D: He just learned to fly.

M: What did you learn about reading?

D: I learned about reading that you just have to
study, study, study. You know. You can't just
read it one time and set it down. You got to
read it over and over and over. And the more you
read it, the more you understand it.

David's ability to verbalize his feelings about reading

and R-W-L gives excellent insight into at least one reading

student's reactions to this type of tutoring, and they are

therefore quoted below:

M: I want to know the reactions of the students to
reading while listening. What do you think?

D: I think you should put it on tape.

M: Should put it in a book?

D: Put it in a book. Let others know --

M: Know what?

D: Know that you can learn it by listening and reading
from the tape. If you write it in a book. Some
people, some people can read and some people can't.
You know. And the ones can read, if they read your
book, they're gonna get them a tape. And they're
gonna read from a tape and they'll sure enough read
first time from a tape. So in that way a person
don't have to be there with it to read, but he can
take that tape home with him and read. And he can
learn it from that. So that's what it done for me.
It really done helped me. -- And before I couldn't
read like I do now.

M: Well, David, I'm going to tell you something.
It's not so much that the tape helped you. But it
gave you a way to help yourself. Don't you think?

S: Uh, huh.

M: 'Cause you are doing all this work. You are doing
all this work by yourself, with the tape. The tape
is telling you, hey, there's somebody there that
cares and that, that will help you when you need

help. -- But, uh, -- I can have another student that -- I <u>do</u> have another student that -- will <u>not</u> use the tape! What do you think is happening?

D: That he, he must be afraid. At first I was afraid to use the tape, too. Sometimes people that can't read, they get afraid. They get choked up. You know what I mean?

M: I know.

D: He just gotta, -- get from that choked up. You know once, once I broke that choke barrier I started /out/.

M: How'd you break the choke barrier?

D: I just kept on. I would get to a point /that time/ I would disgust myself. You know, it was bothering me. And I said, "Shucks, I can't read." Then, what I say, I said, "Yes I can read, too." And I'd go back to read some more. And I'd keep on reading. Well, but, everybody ain't smart. Everybody can't read. But if they can <u>learn</u> to read --

M: The thing is, David, that what really upsets a lot of people, is that they don't want anybody to think they're dumb.

D: Uh huh. That's what the problem is.

M: I think one of my jobs is to convince you, hey David, you've got a lot of brains. You probably know it already, though. You've got a lot of good brains. And my job is to convince the other students, too.

D: Mm hmm.

M: And you can do it.

D: Yeah.

M: And I'm just saying, here's a way. You can take it or leave it.

D: Right. But he, he, the one that don't want to read from that, from your tape, though, he'll learn after a while though, if he. learn from that tape, though, he'll be a whole lot better, though. 'Cause he can't figure them words out right there by himself. He ain't got to that point yet. But after a while -- he can do it.

Much time was spent encouraging David to pay attention to the details of a word he had difficulty with and to use graphic clues to help him remember that word. He was using

minimal cues along with context, which was fine for oral
reading of a prepared selection, but would not always be
enough when working independently. He did not store the
graphic cues in his conscious memory as firmly as he did
contextual cues. When asked to read an isolated word he
had had in his assignment, he too frequently needed the
context to help him. We worked on syllables, phonics, word
families, beginning and end sounds, letter blends, prefixes
and suffixes, synonyms, similar words, definitions, spell-
ing, pronounciation rules, compound words, variations in
sound and spelling--whatever would help him recognize a
specific word the next time he saw it. He frequently
verbalized his word attack modus operandi for me, as when
he said he remembered the -n-a-p in snap because he
patronizes Napa Auto Parts and when he associated the word
sank with the Sanka jar on the table we worked on. I con-
sidered this the best kind of drill for him, when he could
demonstrate that he already recognized a word attack
principle.

Reading students have to devise their own systems for
remembering each word. David felt that writing helped his
reading and often wrote a difficult word several times to
remember it. Once he had copied two pages of text. Hope-
fully, students will use textual clues along with the

context. David went a little beyond this once in a while. Occasionally he drew a little picture above a word. For twinkling he drew a star. For fired he drew a target. For sight, an eye. At first I enjoyed the creativity and allowed him to "cheat" a little, but later I told him that when he draws a picture he is saying "I can't get it without help" and that I feared he might believe himself and not do the necessary analysis.

On February 27th David made six errors in 66 words, or 91% before practicing a selection. The next day, on the same material, he had 98-1/2% after practicing.

I worried a great deal about David's overuse of context, but he repeatedly reassured me that, when working alone, if he came to a word he did not know he "breaks down" the word in any way he can, and by listening to it on tape he becomes more able to do so. As he said it, he "puts it in his ear." This apparently indicates that he used innate phonics, although he never clarified the phrase further.

David had had a "high" on reading for a while. I warned him that he might lose it, and should not be disappointed if he did. On March 6th, when I presented him with a "third grade" book he had never before seen, They Work and Serve (Knott, 1967), he was suddenly totally

incapable of reading words he had read for me many times.
The shock of unfamiliar material affected him as though he
had been doused with cold water. Fortunately, the next
time he came in he announced that he loved reading and had
gone ahead three more pages than he had agreed to do. He
had evidently gotten his impetus back by blocking discourage-
ment with hard work.

On March 12th David read three pages with an average
of four errors per page. On the 19th, after his week-long
visit to his brother, he had completed everything on the
tape without an assignment. I had him read three pages
aloud and summarized the rest. He showed excellent presen-
tation, comprehension, and retention. He did have
difficulty trying to read the word savagely. He struggled
and struggled, attempting to use phonics, but could make no
progress. There was evidence of loss of self-confidence in
his voice before I finally told him the word. This further
supports my conviction that some people cannot apply phonics
to word recognition; the repeated failure becomes too
demoralizing.

David could not keep up the pressure he had been
laboring under for the weeks we had worked together. He
came in unprepared several times and was absent more fre-
quently than previously, although usually with very good

excuses. I felt the shock of his twin brother's illness—terminal cancer—had a lot to do with it, as David did not focus on his work as well as he had previously. We did much of the work together, and he read acceptably under those circumstances, but he did considerably less independent practice. We reduced his assignments to a page or even half a page, carefully preparing him to study the text alone, yet his error rate rose slightly.

Adjournment

On April 10th David did well on the two and a half pages he had prepared. On the next page, which he had not prepared, he made eight errors. We discussed why he was able to read some of the longer words, yet missed some little words. In explaining how he'd remembered superstition he said:

> Because I looked at the first part. Then I looked at the second part. Then I looked at the third part and the fourth part. -- /soo-pur-stish-shun/.

When I suggested he had memorized whole big words he said:

> Nn. Nn. -- I read it. I read it without the tape, too. First I read it with the tape. And then I cut the tape off. Then I'll read it, you know. -- And that way I won't be memorizing. I'll be knowing what I'm saying. And when I gets to those words, I breaks them down, you know. I look at 'em. -- Real good. The more I look at 'em, the better I can get 'em, you know.

However, when we reviewed some words in isolation that had been circled in the text for study in the past he

remembered about half of them. Another time he recognized center in one context but not in another on the next page. He also could read honor when he saw it a first time, but when it had a capital H later he did not recognize it until we went back to the previous context.

On April 16th I noted that he had to practice only two words on one page and six on another. He had gone over the material only twice before reading it aloud quite well.

David seemed to want to be independent of the tapes in the last few weeks we worked together. He had the confidence to work on new material without the assistance of the tape, and went back to the tape only for the few words per page he could not work out alone. This was a good omen; he felt he was able to recognize words much better than he had previously been able to. I also felt he realized that we would not be working together much longer and any other teacher would require more independence. He tried several times to read material he had not listened to and read acceptably.

I had David listen to the last two paragraphs of Jonathan Livingston Seagull (Bach, 1970) five or six times and demanded excellence in his reading; he missed one word.

We discussed what material he would read next. He suggested the newspaper, which I agreed to. He said he

would bring in his Sunday paper to work on. I had brought

in <u>Martin Luther King</u> by Ira Peck (1971). David was very

interested in this book and the reading level seemed appro-

priate. I felt he could read most of it without help.

Since the print was denser per page we agreed he would read

one page a day, but prepare only one paragraph of this to

be read orally.

The following is an excerpt of his reading after

practice on April 25th:

```
D:  /?/ -- really (didn't, don't, d-o-s-e-n, didn't)
M:  D-o-e-s
D:  - doesn't matter what will /?/ now, because I have
    been to the (promised land)
M:  To the what ?? -
D:  - the mountain top -
M:  That comes from memorizing!
D:  - mountain top and I look over and I seen the
    promised land.  I may not get there with you but
    I want you to know tonight that we as a people
    will get to the promised land.  So I-, I'm happy
    tonight.  I'm not worried about anything.  I'm not
    in any /?/.  My eyes have seen the (gate) -
M:  The what -?? -
D:  - the g-l-o-r-y, (great)
M:  G-l
D:  (Golden.  Golden?) - of the coming of the Lord.
M:  My eyes have seen the - what?
D:  Glory?
M:  Yeah, you know that one.
D:  Glory.  Glory.
M:  That's the only word you had any trouble with.
    Yesterday you had trouble with fear and today you
    got it like anything.  That's beautiful!
```

The following day he read 99% of the words in the first

three paragraphs. The next paragraph was more difficult.

He had gone over the material three times before reading for me. He summarized the rest, showing good understanding.

Thelma

The Beginning

Thelma read the first two stories in The Laubach Way to Reading, Skill Book 1 (Laubach, Kirk, & Laubach, 1977) excellently and with good expression. She had been working in this book in her classroom. It was immediately apparent she had been assigned a text which was far beneath her abilities, so I asked her to read the word list in the back of the book. She had no problems on the first few words. To save time, I indicated the words I thought she might find the most difficult. She read each one easily.

I found a more advanced Laubach book, People and Places (1968), at a "third" or "fourth" grade level, in the storeroom in which we worked and had her read from it. Thelma read well and was able to summarize satisfactorily. She also drew a good inference somewhat later in the same story in response to a question from me, showing good comprehension. She made about one error per paragraph, or three or four on a page, indicating the material was at her instructional level.

Thelma read the first hundred words on the Fry List (Fry, 1980) correctly with three self-corrections. On the

second hundred words she missed only two, one of which was an ending.

In spite of these accomplishments Thelma immediately started criticizing her reading, telling me she was not able to understand phonics. She said she has trouble with the /guh/ (sic) and /huh/ (sic) sounds, as in girl and hand. She also told me she always leaves the 's off of man's, but she hadn't. When she said lesson by mistake she corrected herself by first saying /lis/ /ten/, then changing it to listen. I felt she had a fair understanding of word attack skills.

I then asked Thelma to give me the initial letter in several words and she did so readily. I asked her to tell me which was a long or short vowel in a list of easy words. She got them all right except he, which she said was short because "when a vowel stands alone it is short." She was so intent on doing well she over-applied rules she had learned and then could not make them work for her. However, Thelma used context so skillfully she was often able to compensate for these misconceptions.

I learned as we worked together that she did have a problem with some of the sounds in words. At times she confused the m and n sounds. She appeared not to hear endings of words clearly. For example, she called me Mary

instead of Marion (a problem other people also seem to have), even though I corrected her several times. When I asked Thelma if she hears endings she said "I don't trust myself." She said that if someone is supervising her she is more careful. She also said she can get the sense without the endings, which was often true. It should be noted that Thelma's own speech omitted or slurred over many endings. I had difficulty understanding her pronounciation of some words. An example was the farcical time she kept saying <u>mirror</u> and I heard <u>mare</u>. She knew exactly what she was saying, but I was not tuned in to that particular pronounciation of the word. Another time, <u>argue</u> sounded like /ar-gee/. <u>Our</u>, <u>are</u>, and <u>or</u> were pronounced the same, and she said she had difficulty differentiating them in writing. She could hear the differences in my pronounciation but could not mimic them.

Another of Thelma's worries was that she could know something one day and completely forget it the next. Our first day together she read the word <u>chart</u> by seeing <u>-art</u> and putting the /ch/ sound in front of it. Two days later she worked it out after much effort. On February 20th she did not recognize <u>condemned</u> in isolation, although she had read it several times in the preceding two weeks within a story. She understood the meaning, as it had been a new

word for her and we had talked about it at length. She
said thermometer for thermos when she saw it in isolation,
but in context she had had no trouble with it. I do not
feel this was an unusual problem. Some words require more
repetitions for particular individuals, and anyone would
find them easier within a context.

Her use of context was a major asset. Another was her
ability to read a word after I gave her a rhyming word; an
example, I felt, of her innate use of phonics. Thelma also
worried about her lack of skill with definitions, not
realizing that her limited reading background had prevented
her from amassing a large realm of experience with words.

When I asked her to monitor her thought processes after
working out a word she said she was unable. I asked her
how she would remember condemn after I told it to her and
she said: "I will promise you, I don't know. I, I, I may
not remember it at all, as far as I'm concerned. I don't
know. /Con/ /demn/."

When I asked her to explain how she had worked out a
word her stock answer was "I just know." She was surprised
when I told her she had substituted an l for the h to
change hedge to ledge. I do feel that as we became better
acquainted she grew more and more willing to examine her
reasoning processes.

It was hard for her to change tracks once she had made

a mistake. If a word gave her a problem she sometimes

became completely helpless. This seems to have been due to

the building tensions and the creation of blocks.

Her motivation was very high, but she easily got upset

with herself, as when she said:

> I want to learn it so bad and, and I just go all out.
> And then I lose what I know because I get so -- all
> worked up. She (the teacher) said I just get so
> uptight and I was high as a kite and I can't /?/. . . .

It was clear that a good part of my job would be to help

her relax and learn to trust her own good reading ability.

I discovered that reading aloud to her was one way to get

her to relax after she told me that when her mother used to

read to her she would fall asleep.

Working with R-W-L

I told Thelma it was all right to memorize words,

trying to ease her tensions about applying phonics. She

learned most words quickly and needed to lean on her

strengths. Yet she resisted working with the materials I

taped for her, often saying she could not get the tape to

work or "the teacher pushes me too hard and when I get

home there's not much time left." She would listen to a

tape once, but seldom studied the "difficult" words at

the end of the tape. She did, indeed, only need one expo-

sure to a word much of the time to remember it in context,

yet repetition would have cut down her forgetting. I
emphasized the vocabulary more within the text as I taped
it in attempting to get around this.

She was quite choosy about the material she agreed to
work with. Once she had decided a story was not interesting
she was unable to change her mind about it. She said the
Reader's Digest Skill Builders (Noreda, Sinclair, & Sparks,
1973) turned her off and she rejected what I thought was a
fascinating, suspenseful story about the rescue of some
people who almost went over Niagara Falls in a boat. Even
after working on that story a little she elicited no
enthusiasm. She did become interested in a human interest
story from the same volume. She also spurned Reader's
Digest's "Teen-Age Tales" (1958) and two other books I felt
might be suitable for her to work on. She enjoyed reading
a little story I had written and read it well, although
there had been no attempt to control the vocabulary in it.
When I mentioned reading poetry she said I "shut her off."

We took turns reading Midnight by Sam Savitt (1974).
Thelma's reading was somewhat more word-by-word than
previously in this book, but she read without any rehearsal.
Not too many words per page gave her difficulty. She also
read Curious George Learns the Alphabet (Rey, 1963) to Rosa.
This was a simple book, but she enjoyed showing off her

ability to a fellow student. At home, on her own, she had been reading a Bible story book. She strongly expressed a desire to work on reading the Bible, yet I had misgivings about a public classroom as the time or place to comply with her wish. I may have missed an opportunity to elicit real enthusiasm about reading with this decision. Her teacher had by then decided the Laubach Skill Book 1 (Laubach, Kirk, & Laubach, 1977) was too easy for Thelma. For the most part, I then resigned myself to backing up the work her teacher assigned. We worked on four or five other books, mostly little texts with questions at the end of each chapter. Thelma felt she needed to remember all the context in order to answer the questions, but I assured her that it was all right to reread and to search for the answers to each question.

Thelma had a problem opposite to that of most beginning readers. Her eyes were usually well ahead of her voice, which is the goal of a good reader, but in this case it created carelessness and anxiety. She read too fast, sacrificing meaning. Efforts to slow her down were success-ful for only two or three sentences. Once I taped a story very slowly, emphasizing the words she needed to work on. But Thelma read the story without using the tape. Having heard it once was enough for her. Another way I attempted to slow her down was to put my finger over the words

following the word she was reading. In this way she gave
more attention to the individual word she was reading.

I felt Thelma could read more independently if she
chose to. Her word analysis skills seemed sufficient.
Some examples of Thelma's abilities follow:

-She changed hug to huge, changing the sound of the g
without guidance when I sounded the long u.

-She said /just/ - /ice/, then changed it to justice.

-She read interrupted by using interested and up.

-She read hypocrite using her good intelligence. To
explain how, she said "I thought it was going to be that."

-She got grouchy from /gr/ /ch/ /y/, guessing the
vowels.

Thelma frequently complained about her teacher and her
classroom. The students read in pairs in her class,
correcting and helping each other. She said there was too
much commotion for her to concentrate. She was intent on
learning to read--on her terms. Yet she told me that she
only knows how to read aloud, that she gets more sense out
of materials she reads aloud, and that reading silently is
for people who know how to read. Even when I asked her to
read silently I could hear a soft murmur.

Once, when I asked Thelma to answer a list of questions
at the end of a story, her responses were interesting.
Each choice set off some logic which she defended, not

accepting that three out of four choices in each case were designed to be incorrect. If necessary she made up additional information not in the story to support her answers. She only did a fair job on matching vocabulary to definitions that lesson.

Adjournment

We reviewed the Fry List (Fry, 1980) before we parted. Thelma had had no real errors up to number 222, when Tammy came in.

I do not know whether Thelma made progress in her reading. She felt she had come a long way. She was exposed to a lot of materials in the time we spent together. I attempted to answer her questions and to guide her to more independence and confidence in reading. Because of her resistance to R-W-L I do not know whether it can be credited with helping her. I do feel she became more relaxed about reading while with me. Ideally, there should be a carryover into the future without me.

Rosa

The Beginning

When Rosa "read" for me I found she had very few reading skills. She had memorized much of the first page of The Laubach Way to Reading, Skill Book 1 (Laubach, Kirk, & Laubach, 1977), but she could not identify any of the

words in isolation. Most of the text was redundant, and she had used the picture clues on the preceding page to help her with the various nouns. She could not point and follow word boundaries reliably when read to. She did not remember many of the letters of the alphabet consistently. One day she could spell the word blue for me correctly twice while looking at it and then she completely blocked on remembering the names for the letters l and u. She confused the enunciation of some of the letter names, saying /ah/ for a, or /jee/ for j, for example. This could be at least partly due to her Spanish background and possible confusion from learning the alphabet in two languages.

She recognized almost no words on the Fry List (Fry, 1980). Rosa did tell me in at one point, but didn't remember it later. She could read the digits from one to ten reliably but needed help with subsequent ones.

When she wrote her first name she left out one letter and did not use the lines as a guide for placement of the letters, scattering them in space rather than lining them up next to each other. When copying words she usually copied about 90% of the letters correctly, but again, Rosa had difficulty with their placement with reference to a line and with the size of the taller and shorter letters in

relation to each other. She occasionally reversed letters
to their mirror image, primarily the b's and d's. When
working on b's and d's with her I noticed that she did not
always perceive the difference in the sounds of the letters
when I dictated them and I questioned whether this was an
attentional deficit or a hearing problem. In addition, she
had not learned the difference between "letter" and "word"
or "spelling" and "reading"; she frequently spelled a word
when asked to read it or said what appeared to be any word
that came to mind when she was asked to spell something she
was looking at.

When Rosa was told a word she usually did not remember
it more than a few seconds. Any distraction could erase it
from her memory and she frequently could not concentrate
enough to retrieve it. When we worked with running text
she would memorize a sentence, then recite the whole
sentence in order to "read" a single word within it. At
times, with long wait-time, she was able to find a word in
her memory by reviewing several possibilities, rejecting,
choosing, sometimes just guessing. One could see how hard
she was trying by the tension in her face. She could not
recover and verbalize her thought processes, but she
habitually thought aloud, so I was able to follow them at
times.

I had to be stern but loving with Rosa. Again and again it was necessary to redirect her attention to the task at hand, as she apparently could not focus for more than a few seconds at a time without reminders. I told her over and over that she must pay attention. She accepted the direction well and it usually elicited greater effort and a higher success rate in whatever she was doing.

Working with R-W-L

Most of the time it was not feasible to use tapes with Rosa because she did not comprehend the operation of the tape recorder very well. The intermediation of a machine presented an additional challenge she did not need, and it was easier and safer to work with her directly. I did try taping some of her work, but only felt confident about her working on it when I was available to run the tape recorder myself and ensure that she kept the place.

I drilled Rosa intensively on the alphabet and on words she brought from home and from her classroom. We read and reread the books she brought in. Because someone in her church was also tutoring her it was not always clear whether her children had chosen the books or her other tutor had. They were usually appropriate to her abilities and she accepted their content, despite the fact that they were more suitable for a four to six-year-old child.

An effective technique with Rosa was reading a children's book to her several times and gradually allowing her to finish sentences or fill in very obvious words. This was Hoskisson's (1975b) Stages One and Two in practice. These words were not easily remembered isolated from the text, although we worked on them individually. Hoskisson's method was successful in teaching Rosa to point to individual words in running text. She eventually did learn to recognize word boundaries through the use of this method.

In an alphabet book we read together Rosa pointed out the four occurrences of <u>apple</u> on the first page, matched the repetitions of the word <u>balloon</u> to the first occurrence on the second page, and continued in a similar manner throughout the book, finding and matching words. When we repeated the task, I wrote the words on cards and had her match them to the pictures. She was able to remember and identify each one. After this she said her ears were ringing. She had been working exceptionally hard and had maintained attention better than ever before. When we returned to our everyday words she started out fairly well, but eventually succumbed to utter confusion. She was unable even to tell me any of the words I had felt sure she knew. She was exhausted. The next day she was back to her usual on-again, off-again performance. I believe her whole

world must be insecure and unreliable, and she therefore expects the same from letters and words.

Other books we read were <u>Cinderella at the Ball</u> (Hillert, 1970), one of the <u>Fat Albert</u> books, and the story of <u>Goldilocks</u> (Cauley, 1981), all of which she had brought in.

We made word cards for every word Rosa was working on, going over them daily. On the back of each card I drew a picture or a symbol for her to check herself with. For example, I drew a red hexagon for stop, a green ball with lines radiating from it for a "green light" for go, a check for yes, an X for no. I drew whatever seemed appropriate that we could agree on. She had no difficulty remembering these visual cues even when she didn't recognize a word immediately.

I found that Rosa could point to a word I asked her to find in a list or among a group of word cards somewhat consistently after we had studied the words. In addition, we worked on matching an alphabetized list of nouns her teacher had given her to a picture of the word. Then I would ask her to find the word that began with a, b, c, etc., and read it, matching the ones she couldn't remember with their pictures.

Once Rosa was able to arrange word cards into a sentence as I called the individual words, no matter how I had arranged the cards. If some words were upside down she still found the correct card. Her distractibility prevented her from being able to arrange a whole sentence from word cards by herself, however. One day she surprised me by telling me that <u>doll</u> was almost like <u>dog</u>, yet we did not have a card for <u>dog</u>. She could visualize the word in abstraction. She also could see that <u>boat</u> and <u>doll</u> had some similarities and verbalized this, precipitating another review of the difference between <u>b</u> and <u>d</u>.

On March 20th she read several of the words on her cards well. When Rosa did not remember one of them she said:

    R: I studied. I want to learn those!
    M: All right. Don't be impatient with yourself.
        Slow down.
    R: I studied. I know all of them now.
    M: I know you know all of them. I know you know that
        one, too. Now just don't say anything until you
        remember. You will remember.
    R: L-
    M: I-n-
    R: i-n-s-e-c-t. --
    M: --   in-
    R: insect. (She read all the others.)
    M: Very good. Good. I'm real proud of you.

We started working on the <u>Hip Reader</u> (Ruchlis, 1969) on March 20th, as I thought it would help her with discriminating between similar words, as <u>cat-bat-fat</u>. Much of the

time she could see and remember the differences without
inordinate difficulty.

I found that Rosa was able to remember pairs of words
more easily and for longer periods of time than isolated
words, particularly if they were alliterative, as big and
blue, or if they were opposites, as in and out. We drilled
on them separately as well as in the phrases. It still was
more difficult for her to read big or out in isolation,
however.

There was other carry-over. When she brought in an
employment application form for me to fill out for her she
recognized the words yes and no.

Rosa did much writing, both with me and for her
teacher. Her placement, spacing and size of letters
improved during that time.

Eventually we were able to create little stories with
the words she had been studying. Besides reading them, she
also wrote them from dictation while copying. For example,
we talked about how she must know which door to go in when
she goes to the K-Mart or "she'll bump her nose."

Rosa at the K-Mart

I go in
Rosa, go in.
Yes, I go in.
I (want) a big blue (book).
Go out.
Rosa go out.
Yes, I go out.

Adjournment

While Rosa did make progress, it was always very slow.
The following demonstrates how slowly:

M: What is this word?
R: Out. In.
M: Y-e-s
R: /??/
M: What is y-e-s?
R: Out?
M: No.
R: In.
M: Y-e-s.
R: Go?
M: No.
R: In?
M: No. What's y-e-s, Rosa?
R: Out.
M: Be careful. No, no, no! Rosa. You're just
    saying a lot of words. You're not reading it.
    Read the word y-e-s.
R: Yes.
M: Good! See, I knew you knew that word but you
    weren't really reading it, were you? Now, what is
    y-e-s?
R: Yes.
M: You know that. Now, I want you to say it when you
    see y-e-s. I don't want to hear all these other
    words. I only want to hear yes.
R: Yes, I go out.

The next time she saw y-e-s she said "no-yes."

Similarly, for some reason she rejected remembering the

word and although it appeared between many of her pairs of

words. We worked on it almost every day, week after week.

Gradually she remembered it more frequently.

On April 5th she read yes, no, in, out, big, stop, go,

cat, dog, bird, you without help or much hesitation. She

could not read up, down, blue, I, this without the pictures

cueing her. When I gave her the Fry List (Fry, 1980) again
she read six of the first hundred words.

We read <u>Curious George Learns the Alphabet</u> (Rey, 1963),
Rosa pointing out the (underlined) words she knew: <u>This</u> <u>is</u>
George, <u>This</u> <u>is</u> <u>a</u> <u>big</u> <u>A</u>, <u>This</u> <u>bird</u> <u>is</u> <u>blue</u>, with some help
on <u>bird</u>. This was the first sign of real reading on her
part.

Another book Rosa brought in was <u>Clifford, the Big Red</u>
<u>Dog</u> (Bridwell, 1963). I had her point out the words she
had been studying. She recognized <u>is</u>, <u>this</u>, <u>at</u>, <u>I</u>, but
couldn't remember <u>and</u>, <u>a</u>, <u>I</u>, <u>the</u>. She found <u>the</u> several
times in the first three pages, then confused it with <u>this</u>.
I had her point to the words as I read them, repeating
after me and reading the words she knew. In the sentence
"At the corner I saw a big dog coming," she was able to
read: <u>at</u>, <u>the</u>, <u>I</u>, <u>a</u>, <u>big</u>.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Answers to Research Questions

It is now possible to make some tentative statements

regarding the research questions listed under Purpose in

Chapter I. Future studies will define these assumptions

more concretely when enough students have used R-W-L to

provide additional direction and credence.

1. When should or should not reading while listening be
used in teaching reading to adults? Does it meet the needs
of some students better than others, or does it help all
literacy students?

Reading while listening should be used whenever it

appears to be the appropriate way to teach a student, but

it should not be forced upon adults, who need to be in

control of their learning. Fred and David worked hard

using R-W-L and recognized that it was helping them. Even

though Tammy and Thelma rejected the repetition inherent in

R-W-L, they both acknowledged that their reading had

improved after using it.

Fred, Tammy and Thelma all showed improved reading on

the days when they had worked on R-W-L the hardest. This

may be an indication that their work habits were a drawback

to successful use of R-W-L. David's consistent progress attested to his better self-discipline.

If a student does not have the capability of using a tape recorder, as in Rosa's case, the tape recorder cannot be used to supplement the teacher. The teacher will have to provide all the audio input. The best way to communicate how the reading process functions to Rosa was by reading to her and teaching her to follow the text with her finger. Repetition provided the necessary security for her to accept the consistency of print.

Even when students appeared to be rejecting the repetition involved in R-W-L, each student, nonetheless, enjoyed being read to. The variety of books Rosa brought in attests to this. Fred's interest in the motorcycle story (Radlauer, 1978), even to asking a classmate to finish reading it to him, is another example. Thelma's relaxation upon being read to is still another indication that R-W-L held some value for her.

2.   Can R-W-L be individualized to meet students' needs? In what ways can it be adapted to meet the varying abilities of each student?

Reading while listening can be adapted in many creative ways, according to the backgrounds and competencies of each student. Reading books to a very beginning student such as Rosa can establish habits of reading from left to right.

Rosa and Fred both benefited from pointing to the words as they were read or played back on the tape, strengthening their understanding of what a word is. Exposure to whole sentences and paragraphs confirmed the concept that reading is a form of communication similar to speech. The use of language experience stories for both of these students provided additional support to this perception.

Other ways of adapting reading while listening were found for the better readers. All of the students made good use of context or improved their use of it by attending to the syntax in a sentence to help predict what an unknown word would be. David verbalized this exceptionally well when he said the repetition gradually improved his comprehension. Repetition also enabled them to focus on the more difficult words and analyze their graphic components enough to embed the words in memory, both visually and aurally or, to use David's phrase, to put them in their ears. Taped word lists also helped Fred and David to expedite word analysis and retention. Attempts to have Tammy and Thelma use this type of drill were rejected much of the time. Underlining unknown words may be equally effective and is recommended because the words then remain within their context as the student searches for them on a tape.

Since adult literacy students arrive in the classroom
with high motivation they are primed to find their own ways
of improving their skills. Again, David was especially
verbal about how he analyzed words to retain them in memory
after hearing them on the tape. Having each of the students
put their word attack methods into words and having these
methods accepted reinforced their learning, their motivation
and their self-concepts. Fred also learned to monitor his
thought processes. Eventually Thelma did, too. Efforts
to have Tammy and Rosa do so did not give as clear-cut
results.

3.   How can R-W-L be integrated into the curriculum? Does
it adapt to various teaching methods and materials?

Reading while listening adapts to most types of
materials. It can be used with readers with minimal
abilities, as with Rosa, and has been used with underpre-
pared college students (Curry College, 1982). Either the
teacher may do the reading, as I had to do with Rosa until
she began to grasp some of the vocabulary; it can be put on
tape, as was done with the other students; or the teacher
and student may take turns reading, as David and I did with
Midnight, The Champion Bucking Horse (Savitt, 1974). Jordan
(1966) said R-W-L can be used in every subject area,
although this dissertation held primarily to using it to
teach reading.

Varieties of materials were deliberately used in this study, demonstrating the flexibility of R-W-L. Language experience stories seemed appropriate for some of Fred's and Rosa's work, and probably would have been useful with Tammy, Thelma and David. Standardized texts emphasizing various reading skills were used with each of the students. Books chosen by the students or by me were used as often as possible with each of the students. I now feel there should have been still more literature and less drill.

In working with Jonathan Livingston Seagull (Bach, 1970) David was working well above any vocabulary "level" he would have achieved if he had been formally tested. The dense exposure to basic vocabulary in this book reinforced and expanded his vocabulary and his self-confidence progressively. I credit David's high motivation as well as the analogy of Jonathan's attempting the impossible for his success almost as much as I do R-W-L. In time David was able to handle larger and larger assignments in decreasing periods of time. This would be the goal for other adult reading students as well. Yet I rejected Jonathan Livingston Seagull for use with Tammy, although her initial reading level may have been higher than David's. Her lack of independent work habits and her fragile ego suggested that she might not be able to handle the

challenge of too many difficult words and such a long story.
This could have been a misjudgment.

Difficulty of vocabulary, therefore, is not the primary
consideration in choosing reading materials. Some of the
vocabulary in the experience stories worked on with Fred
was not "beginning" vocabulary. Because there was suffi-
cient subjective meaning in the material this was not a
serious deterrent. The syntax was his own, so Fred could
remember the words, at least in the contexts he worked on.
Eventually there would be carry-over. While vocabulary was
very carefully selected for Rosa, she understood that she
would always be told words too difficult for her or those
not among her target words. On the other hand, Tammy and
Thelma's vocabulary challenges were held close to their
ability levels in order to bolster their self-confidence.
Since they strongly felt they needed to practice the word
attack skills they were familiar with, too high a challenge
might not have been profitable.

Varying amounts of repetition were necessary, according
to the student's abilities and his or her experience with
R-W-L. Jonathan Livingston Seagull (Bach, 1970) was the
first complete book David had ever read. He identified
with Jonathan's pursuit of excellence. At first he
resisted sufficient practice, but once he saw the

possibilities in working with tapes and became willing to
do the necessary work, his repetitions gradually decreased.
They started at from 10 to 12 repetitions and were gradually
reduced to between 2 and 5, depending on his concentration
and the length and difficulty of the selection. Because
he was reading continuous text he could appreciate that
the repetition improved his comprehension. David used
R-W-L independently to read from the King James version
of the Bible, with help from his wife, and worked on other
new material without teacher guidance, maintaining his sense
of autonomy. This improved his rate of progress even more
rapidly.

Fred frequently commented that he appreciated having
his assignments on tape, also. He required from 6 to 10
repetitions for enough mastery to allow him to attempt
independent reading, although he generally did less. His
sporadic bursts of intensive work were usually evident the
following day in better delivery, more obvious comprehension
and improved self-esteem. Rosa, as previously mentioned,
needed more direct supervision than tapes could provide
yet she worked very hard. She stoically accepted, even
sometimes enjoyed, the innumerable repetitions required to
retain anything in her memory.

4.   What are students' short term and long term attitudes toward the use of R-W-L? Is it universally accepted, or will some students use it more than others?

Some students, like Rosa, Fred and David, accept R-W-L and work with it assiduously. David's enthusiasm for R-W-L grew as he worked with it. He continued finding new and more refined benefits throughout our time together. I always had hope that Thelma and Tammy would see the possible benefits in R-W-L. They did appreciate a resource that told them difficult words, but cannot be blamed for their insight that it was easier to ask a teacher for help when necessary. They felt that one or two listenings were sufficient most of the time. I considered many possible reasons for their lack of enthusiasm, including combinations of some of the following. There would probably be additional reasons for other students.

•They were tied to a phonic approach to word analysis and may have felt that R-W-L is not reading. Being told a word may even have been considered a form of cheating because it made the work too easy. The percentage of unknown to known words was quite small. This could have given them the feeling that the listening task was more tedious than I thought it was.

•Perhaps there was some pride involved. As more advanced readers they may have felt they were not being

allowed to use the word analysis skills they had developed, although this is not actually the case. In R-W-L students do use these skills internally as a means of committing the vocabulary to long-term memory, supplementing them with the well-refined language-learning skills they already possess. In addition, in R-W-L the context clues retain their function of eliminating many irrelevant possible word choices.

•They may not have had easy access to a tape recorder on a regular basis. Or they may not have been familiar enough with tape recorders to be comfortable using one unsupervised.

•They may not have had the self-discipline to work independently and needed more self-confidence before they could do so.

•They may have rejected an opportunity to be independent out of insecurity because they felt a need for being dependent.

•They may not have had time to do "homework" because of classroom and home schedules. Perhaps I was insensitive to this. Or they may simply have rebelled at the idea of "homework."

5.   How can one assess the use of R-W-L?

Increase in word reading ability using the Fry Word
List (Fry, 1980) at the beginning and end of the study for
each student cannot be explicitly ascribed to R-W-L because
of the concomitant classroom teaching each student received,
although four of the students showed some increases.
Tammy's poor attendance precluded a follow-up on her reading
of the Fry List (Fry, 1980). Beginning and ending oral
readings may show progress, but the same circumstances
would cloud any formal conclusions here.

While Fred and David used the tapes most consistently,
they made progress at different rates because they were at
different places in their readiness. Fred had an enormous
emotional factor of anxiety, of fear or failure, sometimes
described as "learned helplessness" to deal with. It was
continually necessary to give him ego support in order for
him to allow himself to succeed at all.

David, on the other hand, had the fewest extraneous
deterrents to deal with and was able to make more rapid
progress, but it was progress he had been preparing for for
five or six years. In addition, he received more tutor
time because he was the last student worked with each day.
His strong ego and determination straightened the path for
him where others would have bent. His greatest difficulty

appeared to be focussing his attention on and remembering details, a skill he worked very hard on developing and showed increasing success with. Reading while listening cannot be separated from all of these factors and given exclusive credit for his gains. Yet the minimal progress he had made in preceding years compared with the progress he made during this study may indicate the R-W-L was, indeed, an excellent method for David to use.

Lack of readiness was a handicap for Rosa. While minimal use of tapes was made with Rosa because of her severe learning disabilities, one goal was to prepare her for whatever independence she eventually would be able to handle. Reading and re-reading text modeled for her what she must eventually do when she had progressed sufficiently, and demonstrated that concentration and patient repetition were her means to this independence. Countless reviews of the same words ultimately helped her differentiate a few of them and accept their invariability enough to retain them in her memory. I felt she made commendable progress for Rosa. With much time and patience perhaps she would eventually find some faith in her ability to learn. The individualized attention she received from me was only minimally available in her classroom, but was supplemented by family and another tutor. No firm statement can be made

about Rosa's gains as connected with R-W-L for all these
reasons.

Each student's gains were different. They were not,
could not be, and should not be compared to any standard.
If this were possible they would have achieved in their
first attempts at school as children. One can only measure
gains from their starting to their ending levels of ability.
Rosa, as a very beginning reader, established the concepts
of reading from left to right and recognition of word
boundaries. She had the beginnings of a basic sight
vocabulary. The usefulness of Hoskisson's (1975b) Stages
I and II was clearly evident. Fred reinforced and built up
his basic vocabulary and improved his attentional skills.
He began to understand what reading is. I believe his
self-confidence grew somewhat and his anxiety lessened.
David worked seriously on building vocabulary and improving
his attentional skills, and he discovered improved compre-
hension as a by-product. That is what reading is about.

Tammy and Thelma made some gains in vocabulary.
Thelma, at the same time, gained in self-concept, at least
when working with me. This would ultimately be reflected
in higher motivation. But again, the student whose gains
can very likely be directly attributed to R-W-L was David.
With Rosa the picture has too many extraneous concomitants.

The best measure of reading while listening's value appears to be proportionate to students' use of it balanced against their expressed opinions of its value to them. David's assiduous application brought forth strong growth in his reading abilities accompanied by clearly verbalized metacognitive awareness of the processes he went through to achieve that growth. His fluent appreciation of the worth of R-W-L cannot be ignored.

Fred's and Rosa's progress, while it seemed modest, may have been giant steps for them. It certainly was when compared to their past performances. But their successes could have been due as much to their motivation and intensive work as to the methods used to teach them. It is difficult to make an impartial judgment in their cases. R-W-L was used in conjunction with any other method which appeared to be appropriate. On the days Fred applied himself the hardest he had the greatest success in oral reading and in comprehension. His self-concept on those few days was high, though still fragile. Following oral text seems to have helped Rosa to a better understanding of the reading process. Whether Thelma and Tammy were in a position to truly assess R-W-L is open to question, since they chose to use it minimally. Nonetheless, they expressed

appreciation for the help in identifying words R-W-L gave them.

6.   Is R-W-L effective as a method of teaching reading to adults? Does its use bear out the theory of a whole word approach to reading?

The literature on the subject of R-W-L is positive almost without exception. A large percentage of the studies which have been done with children have shown positive results in test-retest situations.   Teachers who used R-W-L with children spoke very highly of it, even when the quantitative studies done with their students gave nonsignificant results. Meyer (1982) has done the lone quantitative research study to date using R-W-L with adult students and found positive statistical results in most of the skills tested. But one study with adults does not tell us enough to draw firm conclusions. Although this present qualitative study has been subjective, I maintain my thesis that R-W-L has significant potential when used with adult literacy students because of the progress of the students who used it the most.

Chall (1967) in <u>Learning to Read: The Great Debate</u> concluded that any method of teaching reading has some value, but none contains all the answers for every student. Almost any teaching method will show results in proportion

to the amount it is used. Nonetheless, I believe R-W-L meets the learning needs of mature adults better than most other methods of teaching reading because it lets the students find their own ways to learn to read, using the same innate skills they used successfully when they learned to speak.

Progress when using R-W-L depends on a web of elements, and R-W-L cannot be isolated from them. Emotional factors were found to be a deterrent for each of the students at some point. Lack of self-discipline interfered for all of them, but David's determination overcame this problem quite successfully. Failure and defeat in reading had created blocks through the years that were deeply incorporated into the students' self-images as learners. Other factors that interfere enough to prevent assiduous application can only be presumed.

The use of R-W-L provides immersion in whole language reading, which is sometimes missing in reading instruction, but which has been shown to be the foundation for progress in reading. Because this study contained so many naturally intervening elements, the answer to the above question must remain subjective at this time. I believe the use of R-W-L should be attempted with all adult reading students. Many of them may turn out to be Davids.

7.   What are the advantages of using R-W-L?

Language is a form of communication. Reading while listening provides a means of learning to read while retaining the communicative function of reading materials. The learner finds individualized ways of self-instruction similar to the way she or he learned to speak. Reading while listening makes it possible for learning to read to remain a holistic process, avoiding the dissection of text into unrelated exercises. Learners can work on syntax, semantics and phonology, simultaneously or as necessary, in a meaningful context. It does not rely upon a method, but can be used alone or as an adjunct to any appropriate means of exploration that will fulfill students' needs.

8.   Are there any risks in using R-W-L?

My biggest concern in using R-W-L was that students would memorize material instead of analyzing it. For this reason, time was spent aside from direct text, analyzing words that were or might prove difficult. I felt I had a responsibility to students, despite my strong feelings toward R-W-L, to see that there was carry-over to new materials.

Chomsky (1976) was also concerned about the possibility of memorizing, even calling her work with five turned-off-to-reading third graders using taped books "memorization of

of a text." Chomsky recognized that the students were
shifting their attention from word analysis to connected
discourse. They were attending to syntax and semantics as
well as individual letters, or phonology, and were learning
to use context along with the other clues they were already
familiar with in their ultimate search for meaning. When
the bulk of students' energies are focussed on the dissec-
tion of individual words these skills can be pushed aside
instead of incorporated into the instruction. Some students
therefore, like Fred, never receive the message that reading
is a form of communication and treat it as though it were
as meaningless as most crossword puzzles.

To avoid memorization, as Chomsky did, exercises using
alphabetic and phonological features of the text to call
attention to sources of difficulty in word analysis and
comprehension were inserted as necessary, giving students a
more rounded exposure to the reading process. It took
considerable coaxing to encourage David to look closely at
"new" words. Little by little he found ways of remembering
their salient features. Encountering them in succeeding
pages did the rest. As he realized context changed, he
focussed more on the details of each unfamiliar word and
devised ways of remembering them. But as meaning should
always be kept foremost in the teaching of reading the tail

should not wag the dog in R-W-L. Chomsky (1976) eventually found that much of the drill was not necessary and that students discovered their own ways of recognizing and transferring skills to new materials. When I had students work on word lists, perhaps I did not have enough faith in them to work out their own learning methods. Chomsky's students and David demonstrated that it can be done.

Alongside the problem of memorizing is one of too high standards. Teachers and students often feel oral reading should be perfect, that mastery of text means complete mastery. In retrospect, a very large criticism I now have of my work with the students is that I expected too much of them. I accepted oral readings of 85% to 90% accuracy, but then went back to work on the words that gave the students difficulty. This held them back from covering more materials at a faster pace. I believe most other reading teachers would also find it difficult not to "teach" reading and to allow students to learn by discovery.

It cannot be emphasized too strongly that the length of each assignment is crucial to success in R-W-L. It is better to have an assignment only half long enough and have the student glow with the pride of accomplishment than have it longer than the student can handle and feel frustrated. Not all students compare with David, who frequently

challenged himself relentlessly and usually succeeded out of sheer determination. Were it to be done over again, I would give Fred shorter assignments and more success. Perhaps it would have helped him over his intense fear of reading.

The fifth danger I see in R-W-L is insufficient comprehension checks. There are a variety of ways comprehension was checked in this study. Thelma, Tammy and David were frequently asked to summarize material they had worked on. I felt it was not necessary for them to read everything they had worked on aloud. We discussed what was happening in a story as we went along during their oral reading, clarifying the meaning of a word in the process or clearing up misconceptions. We compared the usage of similar words such as, with Thelma, are, or, our, and hour, pointing out how context as well as spelling helps to define them. We restated sentences in our own words. I even had Rosa explain certain passages by asking her what was happening. She was able to do this on an auditory and verbal basis, if not on a visual basis. David's and Tammy's use of visualization helped them understand and retain some concepts, or "see what's going on."

Suggestions for Further Research

Meyer's (1978/1980, 1982) study showed R-W-L can have positive effects in a group situation, but the amount of work questioning whether R-W-L can be used with adults does not begin to approximate that already done with younger, school-aged pupils. The following are only a few of the possible avenues research on R-W-L might take in the future.

While some of the literature with children demonstrated R-W-L being used without accompanying instruction (Heckleman, 1966; Hoskisson, 1975b) others believed that it should not be used alone (Jordan, 1971; C. Chomsky, 1976). The present study was done with concurrent classroom teaching. Meyer (1979/1980) isolated the use of reading while listening for a short period of time. This appears to be an important difference in philosophy and methodology which needs to be examined. Students in the present study were chosen randomly, and it has been seen that the range of mental, physical, and emotional assets and deterrents such as attitudes, self-confidence, degree of autonomy, verbal ability, distractibility, and many other characteristics was quite diverse. Statements made about any one of the five students rarely held true for any other and each, even David, required the support of working one-on-one. It

would be interesting to be able to sort out which students would show the best promise for using R-W-L by itself or in combination with other teaching methods. Would the answer ultimately be based on certain characteristics of particular students?

After such sorting had been done, someone might investigate how much or how little support self-directing students need. Methods of presentation which would develop greater independence might also be studied.

As with most studies, very little of the literature states whether increases in reading ability using R-W-L are short-term and limited without further support and guidance, or whether the gains are permanent. Areas of greatest and least gain might also be pinpointed.

As has been mentioned, R-W-L can be a fail-safe method of learning to read. It is possible, then, that students suddenly withdrawn from R-W-L could be left floundering helplessly when the support of tapes is removed as, for example, when they are again exposed to a strictly phonic approach to reading. When David was asked to read unfamiliar material he did give every evidence of having forgotten all he had gained. I have no doubt that he froze. But he turned the temporarily demoralizing experience to his advantage by resolving to work harder. Other students may not

react as positively. I believe David recognized his eventual need for independence from the tapes more fully because of the experience and thenceforth appeared to be working toward that goal more firmly. Would a more eclectic program which regularly included R-W-L forestall such insecurity and maintain self-confidence more steadily?

It would be hoped that exposure to R-W-L should have some positive byproducts students can lean upon. Had there been no concurrent teaching, at the least students should have been reassured that reading does make sense, and that they could confidently rely on context to help them predict some of the possibilities of a particular word within the text. Is there, then, a saturation point for R-W-L, when students have achieved the necessary independence to use the skills teachers have unsuccessfully tried to teach them in the past? This is not asked in order to determine when R-W-L should be discontinued as I feel, along with Matthews (1987) and others that R-W-L has a place in the curriculum throughout students' schooling. It seeks to determine if there is a point at which the student has regained his confidence in the meaningfulness of printed language.

It would be interesting to measure the progress of adult students with little or no previous instruction in reading, perhaps in an underdeveloped nation, after exposure

to R-W-L as compared with some other teaching method. Those who have implemented the literacy work of Freire (Kozol, 1978) in Cuba, Nicaragua, and elsewhere would have opportunities to make such comparisons. These programs would be fertile grounds for this type of investigation.

One might make a comparison of students' progress using tape recorders and books as against lessons presented on a screen, perhaps using an overhead projector or video-tapes. One could compare the number of exposures required for acceptable mastery using each of these methods of delivery with individual students and perhaps come to some conclusion about their comparative efficacy with students with certain learning styles.

Not to be overlooked would be examining carry-over of words learned while using R-W-L as compared with words learned while using other methods of teaching reading. A method of comparing numbers of words recognized in isolation or in new materials could be designed.

There is an open field for relating work with adults using R-W-L to some of the work of Durkin (1966; 1972) with early readers. The setting up of appropriate reading environments should elicit interesting results when adults are taught reading through immersion (Hoskisson and Krohm, 1974).

As the varieties of ways of using R-W-L according to needs of students are many, so the possibilities for research are still very wide open. It may seem too simplistic or too difficult a learning method for some educators, but its potential should not be underestimated without adequate research.

EPILOGUE

Two years later I tried to follow up on the five students. Tammy had dropped out within a short time of my leaving. Rosa had left to care for her grandchild at the end of the summer so that her daughter could finish high school. Fred's daughter had attended college for one year and dropped out. Then Fred dropped out of school.

Thelma had continued her schooling. When I met her in her classroom she offered to read for me. Her reading ability was slightly better than I remembered, but she still read as though she were trying very hard. Just the text was different. Once she had written me that they would have to tear down the school to get rid of her, but now she said she was bored and wanted to drop out. I suggested she try taking other enrichment courses, art, needlework, something she would not be tested in but could enjoy. Her reaction was negative.

I told Thelma I would tape the Bible for her, now that I was no longer her "teacher." I gave her a second-hand copy of Today's English Version of the Bible along with the first tape so we would be using the same text. Its vocabulary appears to be fairly simple. When I checked back with her she was very enthusiastic. She said she had lain on

her bed and listened and listened. No, she did not follow the text. She just enjoyed the listening.

David had left the community college soon after the end of the study to continue his studies with a private tutor. He had been paying $200 a month to work with her four hours a week. He worked on Saturdays to cover this expense. He was very anxious to read for me, so I handed him a draft of the two pages I had written about him in Chapter IV, Introductions. He read confidently, clearly using context, particularly when he came to the words <u>ulcer</u> and <u>pancreatitis</u>. He hesitated over a few words, but worked them out by spelling them first, self-correcting a reversal. His tutoring appears to be heavily word analysis together with daily writing assignments.

David proudly told me that he now runs the machine at work. He had been thoroughly tested orally by three supervisors on his knowledge of the machine and had impressed his supervision with his knowledge. He still intends to learn to take it apart and to repair it. He still intends to get his General Education Diploma. He has bought an entire set of the Bible on tape, and has promised me he will continue using R-W-L with these tapes.

Based on these final observations, my conclusions remain about the same. The one student who used R-W-L

assiduously was making progress. He had not lost his
motivation. The student who was still in school had made
some slight progress due to the passage of time, but she
was losing her motivation. There are so many factors
determining the usefulness of any method of teaching
reading, particularly with adult literacy students, that no
method can be isolated and judged on achievement of it's
users alone. The rationale behind R-W-L is excellent, and
I am convinced that those who use it stand to gain from
their efforts. Having seen the five students within the
contexts of their lives it is obvious why R-W-L will not be
successful with every student. But students who do use
R-W-L stand to profit.

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