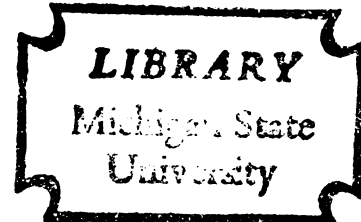




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PERSPECTIVES OF STUDENTS EXPERIENCING  
DIFFICULTIES IN READING

presented by

ANN LEA REISER

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Ph.D. degree in Education-Administration  
and Supervision of  
Student Teaching.

Robert C. Hatfield

Major professor

Date Feb. 23, 1979



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A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF CLASSROOM TEACHERS'  
PERSPECTIVES OF STUDENTS EXPERIENCING  
DIFFICULTIES IN READING

By

Ann Lea Reiser

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to  
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DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

College of Education

1979

## ABSTRACT

### A DESCRIPTIVE STUDY OF CLASSROOM TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES OF STUDENTS EXPERIENCING DIFFICULTIES IN READING

By

Ann Lea Reiser

Children go to school to be educated by teachers. Classroom teachers do not always agree on the content for learning, but they know that reading is perhaps the most fundamental skill in learning and working. Every teacher hopes that his/her students will read, but in each classroom there are students experiencing difficulties with this important fundamental skill. This study was designed to describe and explore classroom teachers' perspectives of students experiencing such difficulties in reading.

How do classroom teachers interpret their roles, make decisions, and act upon these decisions? This study was guided by the following exploratory questions: (1) What elements constitute these classroom teachers' perspectives of students experiencing difficulties in reading? (2) What are the assumptions these teachers make about the students that support their perspective? (3) Which variables influence the teachers' perspectives of their roles in diagnosing and teaching students experiencing difficulties in reading? (4) How do these teachers synthesize the skills of diagnostic teaching into their perspective?

In order to describe teachers' perspectives, in-depth interviews explored what twenty teachers thought about various issues concerning the problem reader. Added descriptive support was also gained through observation of participants as ten of these classroom teachers worked with

students experiencing difficulties in reading while attending a Graduate Reading Diagnostic Institute. This ethnographic technique enabled the researcher to describe and explore classroom teachers' perspectives of students experiencing difficulties in reading.

In relation to exploratory question one, teachers' perspectives were: (1) knowledge of diagnostic teaching as it relates to the students' needs and abilities; (2) content developed around available materials; (3) allocating time to interact with problem readers efficiently; (4) planning the reading period for effective teaching; and (5) displaying a personalized attitude in relating to the problem reader.

Within the instructional approaches and classroom organizational patterns, the dominant perspective among these professionals was to concentrate on the class as a group. This perspective left the principles underlying a diagnostic approach difficult for those teachers who search for answers to teach the student experiencing difficulties in reading.

These teachers did not see the skills of diagnostic teaching as part of their perspective. They did not see their role as having the freedom to develop a reading program that would insure maximum growth for all students in their classroom. For these teachers the skills of diagnostic teaching reside in the hands of a trained reading specialist. These teachers selected and performed a role that reflected the instructional situation they served, which may or may not be necessarily appropriate for students experiencing difficulties in reading.

These teachers were frustrated by a lack of knowledge and ability to analytically approach the problem reader. Their diagnostic perspective was sporadic and not a continuous classroom activity. The beliefs of

these teachers provide evidence for recognizing their perspective as one of placing confidence in school-mandated reading programs to accomplish their goals of helping problem readers achieve competence and satisfaction in reading with very limited or no diagnostic prescriptive teaching. By getting inside these teachers' world one can begin to understand how they make decisions about students experiencing difficulties in reading.

**DEDICATION**

**Arthur G. Reiser**

**My Father**

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION AND PURPOSE

Children go to school to be educated by teachers. Classroom teachers do not always agree on the content for learning, but they know that reading is perhaps the most fundamental skill in learning and working. Today there is a growing sense of urgency in finding better ways to teach reading. Every teacher hopes that his/her students will read, but in each classroom there are students experiencing difficulties with this most important fundamental skill. The teacher's role in alleviating some of the reading problems that children face merits careful study. By looking closely at how the classroom teacher views his/her role, one may begin to understand how each teacher recognizes and solves the difficulties experienced by the problem readers. As teachers begin to think, make decisions, and instruct the student experiencing difficulties in reading, they develop a perspective of these students which influences how they view their role of diagnostic teaching.

The purpose of this study was to describe and explore classroom teachers' perspectives of students experiencing difficulties in reading. How do these teachers interpret their role, make decisions, and act upon these decisions? This study was guided by the following explorator questions:

1. What elements constitute these classroom teachers' perspectives of students experiencing difficulties in reading?
2. What are the assumptions these teachers make about the students that support their perspective?
3. Which variables influence the teachers' perspectives of their role in diagnosing and teaching students experiencing difficulties in reading?
4. How do these teachers synthesize the skills of diagnostic teaching into their perspective?

#### Background and Conceptual Framework

Reading is perhaps the most fundamental skill used in life for the formation of opinions and ideals, for information, and for recreation. The National Assessment of Educational Progress reports that "Nearly everyone considers reading the single most valuable academic skill that schooling imports to young people."<sup>1</sup> There are few phases of life in modern society to which reading does not contribute in some essential way.

Reading has received more monies from federal programs of compensatory education than all other subjects combined. "Right to Read" is more than merely a slogan or the name of a government project. It is, like the right to a livelihood and a guaranteed income, a right that Americans in the latter third of the twentieth century have come to regard as universal and inalienable.<sup>2</sup> Thus, it is not surprising that the National Assessment of Educational Progress considers reading its highest priority subject and intends to assess it most often and most extensively.

Parents, as well as teachers and administrators, are concerned to hear that thousands of students in the schools of today are lacking in

the fundamentals of reading. Such students are being labeled academic failures, culturally deprived, discouraged and inadequate people, unable to cope with the demands and pressures of modern life. The concern for improving literacy is further fed by newspaper accounts of lowered reading and writing skills among contemporary school children, declining Scholastic Aptitude Test scores among college-bound students, and a consequent cry of "Back to the Basics" regarding school curriculum.<sup>3</sup>

Superintendents of school districts are living under the threat of public criticism of reading test scores which, according to recent newspaper accounts, are abysmal portents of a developing illiterate society.<sup>4</sup> Knowingly or not, the principals transmit this pressure to their teachers. Teachers in their own unintentional fashion transmit this pressure to their students. Like a highly communicable disease, all who have become exposed to the pressures of published test scores have become "carriers of anxiety." Today's schools seem to be the object of sweeping and critical examination by many individuals profoundly dissatisfied with the results of reading instruction. Much of the criticism has been directed at the person in the closest daily contact with students--the teacher.

Most frequently, evidence of teacher impact is drawn from the numerous comparative studies of different methods, materials, or classroom organization for teaching reading, where a greater variation within a particular method than between different methods is the common finding. Thus, it is frequently claimed that the teacher, rather than a particular method, is the significant factor in promoting reading achievement.<sup>5,6,7,8</sup> Agin, in her overview of recent research, states that teachers are the

main difference in the reading process and that their commitment to their classes is paramount.<sup>9</sup> Warren G. Cutts, while Specialist for Reading in the United States Office of Education, said at the Claremont Reading Conference:

A poor teacher will get poor results with the very best methods and materials, while a good teacher will get good results with comparatively poor ones. I believe that a good teacher should be able to teach a child to read with nothing more than a mail order catalog.<sup>10</sup>

This statement has been accepted by others, including the Office of Education, to be a verity. Cutts goes on to comment that it is shamefully wasteful, and a bit sad, that the USOE spent over two million dollars on funded research just to prove that ". . . it is the individual teacher who makes the difference--not the materials, not even the method of reading instruction."<sup>11</sup> Massive first grade reading projects have identified the teacher as the crucial variable in the success and failure of the reading program.<sup>12</sup> Fry<sup>13</sup> and Bliesmer and Yarborough<sup>14</sup> concluded in their studies that the teacher is more important than the approach or materials used in the success of the program. In evaluating three grouping procedures for teaching reading, Ramsey concluded:

The thing that the study probably illustrates most clearly is that the influence of the teacher is greater than that of a particular method, a certain variety of materials, or a specific plan of organization. Given a good teacher other factors in teaching reading tend to pale to insignificance.<sup>15</sup>

Major studies in developmental reading have reported no significant difference among a wide variety of first grade reading approaches.<sup>16</sup> Such findings have caused researchers to hypothesize that the key factor in the learning situation is the teacher. Bond and Dykstra highlighted the teacher's importance in their final report of the extensive Co-operative

Research Studies in Reading. The authors reported,

Future research might well center on teacher and learning situation characteristics rather than method and materials. The tremendous range among classrooms within any method points out the importance of elements in the learning situation over and above the methods employed. To improve reading instruction it is necessary to train better teachers rather than to expect a panacea in the form of materials.<sup>17</sup>

Although there is general agreement that the teacher is the key to pupil success in reading, exactly what teacher characteristics make a difference and what relationships indeed exist between teacher performance and student reading achievement has been a continuing puzzlement to educational researchers. The findings of one study directed toward teacher characteristics concluded that "teachers who exert a greater amount of effort on the job in reading produce higher reading achievement scores in their classes than do teachers who exert a lesser amount of effort."<sup>18</sup> Other potentially important teacher characteristics, however, have not been subjected to the rigors of research.

There seems to be little doubt that teachers make the crucial difference. The teacher is seen as an essential part of successful student learning in the area of reading instruction, although which teacher characteristics contribute to reading success are not clear.

To improve their effectiveness, teachers are increasingly called upon to regard the diagnosis and remediation of students experiencing difficulties in reading as a crucial part of their roles as teachers. Stukát concluded in his survey of predictions and actual findings on changes in the teachers' role that teaching will entail increased emphasis in the future on continuous diagnosis and evaluation of individual students.<sup>19</sup> The principles of diagnosis enunciated by such writers as

Sheldon,<sup>20</sup> Bond and Tinker,<sup>21</sup> and many others are concerned largely with sound instruction based on a knowledge of individual differences among students and information about each child's background and progress. These principles do not indicate new areas of responsibility for the master teachers, but are considered good teaching.

Each class, as well as each individual in a class, poses a unique problem for the teacher. Burnett states that, as a professional, the teacher must first of all be equipped to size up the class as a group, as well as each individual in the class in terms of strengths and weaknesses, and, second, know how to keep up a constant appraisal while carrying on a program of instruction designed to bring about improved performance in the reading skill areas being taught.<sup>22</sup>

Strange and Allington list certain requirements that teachers must have to be competent in diagnostic teaching.

. . . these include some commitment to individualization, procedures for both formal and informal diagnosis, teacher understanding of the interrelationships among reading skills, instructional plans based on diagnostic information, and broad teacher knowledge of reading theory and methodology.<sup>23</sup>

In a research venture reported by Burnett,<sup>24</sup> the underlying objective was that of trying to define operationally what is meant by the diagnostic teaching of reading in the elementary classroom and to construct an instrument for measuring a teacher's proficiency at solving problems related to the teaching of reading. Those questions considered pertinent to the study were:

Can the teacher pick out information from a pupil's record file that is critical information in making judgments regarding his reading ability?

Can the teacher formulate classroom diagnostic procedures that are applicable in giving him more information about a particular child's reading skills?

Can the teacher interpret the information after he/she accumulates the data?

Can he/she make meaningful recommendations as to how to remedy certain kinds of weaknesses or problems?<sup>25</sup>

The rather shocking findings of this study show that the performance of experienced teachers in terms of mean scores is only slightly higher than that of students in undergraduate courses.

Education has erred to some extent and continues to do so by making reading diagnosis so much of a specialist function that it stands in danger of becoming divorced from the classroom teachers' perspectives of their role in accepting students for what they are, taking them where they are, and helping them to grow in desirable directions.

One should note that mild to moderate reading difficulties are much more frequent than severe disabilities, although they get much less attention in the literature, and probably make up about 75% of the total reading disability population which is still estimated at between 10 and 15% of the total school population. If not more than 2% can qualify as learning disabled in the future, most reading disabilities will remain in the province of the classroom teacher, without the help of a reading specialist.<sup>26</sup>

So often the reports that come from the expert's diagnosis of a student's reading problems are confined to a list of things the student cannot do; for example, reads two years below grade level. . . . confuses short e sound and short u. . . . consistently omits word endings. Many classroom teachers have already discovered these facts and greet the long-awaited diagnostic report with restrained enthusiasm.<sup>27</sup> Why the teacher hasn't been doing something about her own findings touches at the heart of this research study. Graham Weule states:

Only as the teacher is involved in diagnosis will he/she develop the knowledge and insights to plan and carry out a program of instruction based on his/her analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the students.<sup>28</sup>



Bond's insightful statement hits a very critical area and gives insight into the problem. "May serious disabilities are simply the result of minor confusions which have been allowed to continue to pile up."<sup>29</sup> A statement like the preceding one shows a great need to have the diagnosticians in the classroom where they belong.

It is obvious from the popular controversies in reading instruction that the principles underlying a diagnostic approach are often lost sight of in looking for "all or nothing" answers to how to teach reading.

We are not likely to be satisfied with a doctor who prescribes the same medicine for different illnesses. Nor are we inclined to consult a lawyer who handles a divorce case in the same way he handles a criminal case. Yet many teachers keep expecting to find the one "sure fire" way to teach reading to all students.<sup>30</sup>

The Torch Lighters Revisited reports a study which was undertaken to determine how well colleges of education assume the major responsibility of preparing prospective teachers of reading. When instructors were asked to indicate which topics should receive more emphasis, if time were not a factor, diagnosis and treatment of reading disabilities headed their lists. At the same time, a majority of reading instructors interviewed indicated that educational programs in the area of diagnosis and correction could be more appropriate at the graduate level and in particular in the preparation of reading specialists. It seems from this study of 220 schools, including 74 colleges and universities, that more emphasis was being placed on teaching selected aspects of diagnosis at the undergraduate level, but the major emphasis was usually considered to have only graduate level status.<sup>31</sup>

Smith and Orlosky claim that programs of teacher education poorly prepare the teacher to deal with learning difficulties and disabilities. Teachers know very little about the diagnosis and treatment of pupil's problems in learning or in social and personal adjustment. They state that:

College programs have prepared the teacher to work effectively with the pupils who learn quite well if they are given assignments, materials, encouragement, and a little help. The test of the teacher's professional competence as well as the adequacy of his training is whether or not he can identify and alleviate the difficulties of students so as to release their potential for learning.<sup>32</sup>

In order to get inside a teacher's world and explore teacher perspectives, this study was based upon the theory of personal constructs. The best introductory statement to personal construct theory comes from Bannister and Fransella:

What a person does, he does to some purpose and he not only behaves, but he intends to indicate something by his behavior. Indeed, in construct theory terms, behavior becomes not a reaction but a proposition, not an answer but the question. . . . Behavior, like words . . . , has meaning, and changing and elaborating meaning at that.<sup>33</sup>

Although George Kelly developed the term "personal construct system" and applied it within the field of psychotherapy, it is applicable to almost any setting.<sup>34</sup>

A personal construct means a personal construction or representation of some aspect of reality that is the result of an individual's interpretation of his world. An important implication of such an approach is further explained by Kelly:

. . . constructs are pathways of freedom of movement. Because they are two-way channels they provide freedom for the person who possesses them; because he can move only along these pathways they represent restrictive controls upon everything that he does. It is also taken to apply to that which is commonly called emotional or affective and to that which has to do with action. . . .<sup>35</sup>

A construct may be likened in some respects to a concept; it refers to objects or events that a person categorizes in his mind as somehow similar in meaning. As Kelly has put it:

This is not to say that one construction is as good as any other, nor is it to deny that at some infinite point in time human vision will behold reality out to the utmost reaches of existence. But it does remind us that all our present perceptions are open to questions and reconsiderations, and it does broadly suggest that even the most obvious occurrences of everyday life might appear utterly transformed if we were inventive enough to construe them differently.<sup>36</sup>

Constructs are a means by which we predict and anticipate events. Translating an idea into action and experiencing its consequences counts for much more and constitutes the basis of personal knowledge and learning. As Bussis, Chittenden, and Amarel point out, ". . . if significant change is to occur, it requires a quality of experience that supports personal exploration, experimentation, and reflection."<sup>37</sup>

The manner in which a person defines his situation depends on his perspective. Shibutani sees a perspective as:

. . . an ordered view of one's world--what is taken for granted about the attributes of various objects, events, and human nature. It is an order of things remembered and things expected as well as things actually perceived, an organized conception of what is plausible and what is possible, it constitutes the matrix through which one perceives his environment.<sup>38</sup>

A personal construct, also called a perspective, is a reflective interpretation of that which is encountered and serves as a basis for the actions that are constructed. A person's perspective is a combination of attitudes, beliefs, and behaviors modified by interaction. A perspective enables teachers to make sense of their world, interpret it, and construct decisions regarding their role within this world. It is classroom teachers' perspectives of students experiencing difficulties in reading that this study was designed to describe.

### Methodology

In an editorial in the Reading Research Quarterly, the editors state that we are sorely in need of research designs and new approaches that allow variables to emerge from the situation being studied, that admit to a lack of answers and even to a lack of questions, and that provide for the researcher's biases as well as alternative interpretations. The methodologies should be a natural extension of the mental inquiry the researcher has been engaged in; they should allow issues to emerge as they are studied--that is, they should begin with a presumption of ignorance.<sup>39</sup>

In order to raise hypotheses, collect data, analyze, discuss, reflect, raise additional hypotheses, and, hopefully, raise more questions, a field research design was used in this study.

According to Wilson,<sup>40</sup> the underlying principle guiding ethnographic research is the assumption that individuals have perspectives that determine much of their behavior. The research seeks to discover what those perspectives are, how they develop, and how they influence the behavior of teachers as they work with students experiencing difficulties in reading.

In order to understand teachers' perspectives of students experiencing difficulties in reading, in-depth interviews questioned what teachers thought about various issues concerning the problem reader. Other questions probed for concrete descriptions of life in their classrooms with specific students experiencing reading difficulties.

During a six-week Reading Diagnostic Graduate Institute, the researcher placed herself in the instructional environment, took a limited role in the instructional process, and observed classroom teachers

from as many vantage points as possible. This approach is a variation of participant observation. According to Jo Blanche Geer:

A participant observer is at once reporter, interviewer, and scientist. On the scene, he gets the story of an event by questioning participants about what is happening and why. He fills out the story by asking people about their relation to the event, their reactions, opinions, and its significance. As an interviewer, he encourages the informant to tell his story. . . . As a scientist, he seeks answers to questions by setting up hypotheses and collecting data with which to answer them.<sup>41</sup>

In this study, twenty teachers were interviewed. Ten of these teachers participated in the Reading Diagnostic Graduate Institute. The researcher observed these teachers during their instructional class sessions and also as they diagnosed and instructed students experiencing difficulties in reading. Extensive notes were taken during the instructional class sessions that the teachers engaged in during the six-week Institute. The notes and transcriptions of the interviews were analyzed in order to discover teachers' perspectives of students experiencing difficulties in reading.

#### Definition of Terms

The reader may better understand this study if certain terms are initially clarified.

##### Perspective

A perspective is a conceptual framework within which a person interprets his thoughts, feelings, beliefs, attitudes, actions, and past experiences.

##### Role

A role consists of a set of attributes of behavior as it occurs in a particular situation.

### Diagnostic Teaching

Diagnostic teaching is a way of working with an individual or group of students using procedures based on what we know about children and how they learn. This method of teaching provides a structure for categorizing the most crucial decisions regarding reading instruction.

### Graduate Reading Diagnostic Institute

Courses including theory and technique in both diagnostic and prescriptive behaviors appropriate for the classroom teacher.

### Ethnographic Paradigm

The ethnographic paradigm is part of a research tradition that has been developed by anthropologists and community study sociologists. It involves the collection of data from a variety of sources, probing for the subtle underlying meanings and culminating in the interpretation of the whole phenomenon on the basis of clues provided by the constituent parts.

### Participant-Observation

A method used to interpret and recreate the thoughts and feelings which are in the minds of the studied.

### Formal Interviews

Formal Interviews are a special mode of inquiry used to obtain complete coverage and content from each respondent. The researcher is directive and uses a series of prepared questions.

### Reading Difficulty

A reading difficulty is a weakness in learning associated with the properties of reading.

### Limitations of the Study

An in-depth interview with teachers is not a common procedure in educational research. The in-depth interview was most widely used as a research method in studies of parental child-rearing practices during the 1930s and 1940s. In that context, the validity of the interview was legitimately criticized. It is questionable, at best, to assume that retrospective impressions from parents about their child-rearing practices constitute adequate support for constructing a picture of what really occurred, and it was the specifics of behavior that actually occurred which were of interest to those investigators.<sup>42</sup> The strength of the interview, however, lies in its ability to elicit personal opinions, knowledge, understandings, and attitudes, and accumulated evidence does provide adequate support for reconstructing a general picture of teacher perspectives.

The limited sample of teachers to be studied was selected by the researcher; therefore, the ability to generalize the findings of this study is limited to the teachers who are members of the specific population.

Information for describing what exists by using interview and observation techniques was provided by the teachers. There was no experimental manipulation or attempt to determine the reasons for the teachers' perspectives of students experiencing difficulties in reading. Furthermore, hypotheses generated by this study may serve as the basis for continued research on teaching. The results of this type of study, however, represent teachers' classroom perspectives of students experiencing difficulties in reading.

### Significance of the Study

During a time when a great deal of research on teaching is concentrated on how teachers act and perform, this study of teachers can contribute to research on teaching and/or education in the following ways:

1. Identification and description of teachers' perspectives of students experiencing difficulties in reading may be valuable to teacher educators and future researchers as they investigate the origins, nature, and influence of teachers' thinking and decision-making.
2. Consistent with descriptive or qualitative research procedures, the study generates hypotheses rather than tests them. The internal mental processes (such as perspectives, understandings, beliefs, and role) are major determinants of behavior and of the environments that people create. The in-depth interview procedure and participant observation study may not provide answers to the questions posed. It is expected, however, that the findings will give insights into what teachers believe about their role and how these beliefs might influence the teaching of students experiencing difficulties in reading. Perhaps these insights into teachers' thinking may be a critical matter for further research.
3. Results may be used to help school personnel plan effective in-service courses for staff development.
4. This research may demonstrate the potential merit of ethnographic approaches, such as in-depth interviews and participant



observation in the field of reading, a field where it has not typically been used.

As reading educators seek to improve reading instruction, more information will be needed about how teachers diagnose and teach the student experiencing difficulties in reading. This research was a beginning in helping meet that important need in reading education.

#### Organization of the Remainder of the Study

The content of Chapter I has included a background and conceptual framework for the study, purpose, methodology, limitations, significance, definition of terms, and organization of subsequent chapters.

Chapter II will include a brief review of related research regarding teacher knowledge, diagnostic teaching, teacher education, and ethnography. The procedures for data collection are described in Chapter III. In Chapter IV the data will be presented. Chapter V gives the conclusions and implications of the study.

## FOOTNOTES

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<sup>16</sup>Bond and Dykstra, p. 140.

<sup>17</sup>Ibid., p. 211.

<sup>18</sup>Timothy R. Blair, "Relationship of Teacher Effort and Student Achievement in Reading" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Illinois, Urbana, 1975).

<sup>19</sup>K. G. Stukåt, "Teacher Role in Change," Research Bulletin No. 4 (Gothenburg, Sweden: Department of Educational Research, Gothenburg School of Education, October, 1970).

<sup>20</sup>William D. Sheldon, "Specific Principles Essential to Classroom Diagnosis," The Reading Teacher (September, 1960), p. 2.

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<sup>41</sup>Blanche Geer, "First Days in the Field," in Sociologists at Work, edited by Philip E. Hammond (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Co., Inc., 1964), p. 383.

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## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This study was conducted to describe and explore classroom teachers' perspectives of students experiencing difficulties in reading, using in-depth interviews and a variation of the participant observer method. The materials in the review of the literature were, therefore, drawn from and arranged to provide background in the following areas: (1) teachers' knowledge and conceptions of teaching reading and reading ability; (2) diagnostic teaching of reading in the classroom; (3) teacher education in reading; and (4) research procedures used in this study.

#### Introduction

In 1969, James E. Allen, U. S. Commissioner of Education, proclaimed the "right to read" for every man, woman, and child. He said, in essence, that reading is the very life of the individual--and of society. He stated that

. . . for more than a quarter of our population who read poorly or not at all, the whole world of knowledge and inspiration available through the printed word had never been opened. . . . These individuals have been denied a right--a right as fundamental as the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness--the right to read.<sup>1</sup>

The National Academy of Education's Reading Committee, formed at Allen's request, recommended a twelfth-grade level of literacy for all adults. They defined this level as

. . . roughly, the ability to read with understanding nearly all the material printed in a magazine like Newsweek.<sup>2</sup>

The most recent evidence of the importance of reading in education achievement was found by Benjamin Bloom. He showed that failure to learn to read by the end of grade one is predictive of later failure. A child's grade six reading score predicts rather accurately his achievement in high school and even whether he will enter college.<sup>3</sup>

The Harris Survey of the ability of a cross-section of adults to read material important in coping with everyday problems (e.g., driver's licenses, Medicare applications, etc.) indicated that large numbers performed poorly. Facility of this kind of reading was related to the number of years of school completed and to socioeconomic status.<sup>4</sup>

A study by Thorndike of reading comprehension in fifteen countries found essentially the same relationship.<sup>5</sup>

The ongoing studies of the National Assessment of Educational Progress, a project of the Education Commission of the United States, have called attention to weaknesses in reading skills of representative populations in various age groups including young adults. Instead of standardized tests, these evaluations use specially designed performance measures that tap particular reading skill areas using a multiple choice format. Some of these skill areas are different from school achievement and grade level equivalent literacy, yet they are functionally important (reading newspapers, job applications, and driver's license tests).<sup>6</sup> Such findings suggest that some rather basic practical literacy application skills are being neglected in public educational programs.

In the inner cities there is an insurmountable problem of teaching

hundreds of thousands of children who must not be turned out of our schools with sub-standard educations. Cultural pressures of a different sort in suburbia are resulting in thousands of students limping through their school experiences as underachievers, seriously deficient in reading ability. In face of this urgency, the decision-making responsibility as to how reading is taught must not be abandoned to the most recent innovation to arrive on the scene with specific educational cures.<sup>7</sup>

During these past few years the importance of the teacher in the reading process has been repeatedly asserted. The central role of the teacher in the educational enterprise is self-evident. It is perhaps not surprising, therefore, that, after a relatively long flirtation with various methods of teaching reading, reading experts have returned their attention to the importance of the teacher. The Bullock Report is merely the latest expression of this trend. It concluded that

there is no one method, medium, approach, device or philosophy that holds the key to the process of learning to read. . . . The quality of learning is fashioned in the day-to-day atmosphere of the classroom through the knowledge, intuitions and skill of individual teachers.<sup>8</sup>

Over forty years ago, Gray asserted that the skill of the teacher and the capacity of pupils to learn were more important than the method.<sup>9</sup> Southgate has suggested that what she terms "reading drive" (the beliefs and attitudes of the staff about the importance of reading) and "the teacher competence in reading tuition" (expressed by a combination of ability, beliefs, training, and experience) are more crucial than "media, methods, materials, and procedures" in influencing the reading process.<sup>10</sup>

In an intensive study of twelve first-grade classes, Chall and

Feldmann found that the teacher did make a difference in reading achievement of first-grade children. Among the factors significantly related to high achievement were general excellence of teaching, a thinking approach to learning, a code emphasis in reading, and instruction on an appropriate level of difficulty.<sup>11</sup>

A study of the effects of different follow-through programs on achievement in reading, arithmetic, problem solving, and creativity at the end of grade three found that the more structure programs--that is, those that taught reading directly, systematically, and provided the time for practice--produced significantly higher reading achievement.<sup>12</sup>

Similar results were found recently in England. A study of the effects of teaching style on reading achievement concluded that

. . . the effect of teaching style is statistically and educationally significant in all attainment areas tested. In reading, pupils of formal and mixed teachers progressed more than those of informal teachers, the difference being equivalent to some three to five months' difference in performance.<sup>13</sup>

Overall, striking evidence is presented concerning the importance of the teacher.

#### The Literature on Teachers' Knowledge and Conceptions of Teaching Reading, and Reading Ability

The one assumption regarding the teaching of reading that does not seem open to question is that teachers need knowledge of reading theory and methodology. Observation of reading instruction often causes one to wonder where pupils are going in terms of skills. One critic was moved to remark that "education is aiming at nothing and hitting it most of the time."<sup>14</sup> Although this may be too strong a statement, there is evidence that reading teachers do not always really



know what kinds of readers they want to develop and the specific skills necessary for such development. Testimony to the lack of skills knowledge is offered by the results of numerous studies of teacher understandings in which both practicing and future teachers have been found lacking in basic skills knowledge.<sup>15, 16, 17</sup>

An Inventory of Teacher Knowledge of Reading developed by Artley and Hardin contains ninety five items which sample seven areas included as content in methods courses and considered major factors in reading pedagogy. The seven areas are: reading readiness; word perception; comprehension and critical reading; differentiating reading instruction; silent and oral reading; evaluation, diagnosis, and corrections; and goals of instruction. The inventory was validated by determining if observable differences existed between pre-service and experienced teachers, and among experienced elementary teachers, secondary teachers, and reading specialists. Differences did exist in expected directions based on reading knowledge and/or experience. Reading specialists attained the highest mean score of all groups. However, a correlation matrix and a factor analysis of the inventory indicated a lack of common variance and a factor structure not supporting the seven components of the inventory. While the inventory is comparatively valid and discriminates between teacher groups, it may not be constructed on bona fide factors or it may not measure them accurately. The authors conclude that reading knowledge is complex and difficult to assess.<sup>18</sup>

More specific areas of teacher knowledge have also been reported. Jorgensen studied the ability of elementary school teachers to estimate the grade level equivalents of reading paragraphs selected from the

reading inventory of the Betts Basic Readers which were published in 1964. Teachers varied widely in making accurate judgments of difficulty level of paragraphs from various grades. Urban teachers made higher estimates of grade level than suburban teachers, perhaps because the reading performance of the students they taught was on lower standards of performance. The author suggests that differences in teacher judgment may reflect performance expectations of students and thereby the quality of reading instruction.<sup>19</sup>

The critical reading ability of elementary through high school classroom teachers enrolled in graduate level reading courses in a black university was studied by Alston.<sup>20</sup> Older age and more experienced teachers were associated with a decrease in critical reading. No influences were noted from the number of reading courses taken by subjects, geographic setting, and teacher grade. Therefore, it is difficult to generalize the results of those findings to other teachers. The national assessment of reading findings points to low critical reading ability in all four age groups studied and suggests that this might be associated with a lack of emphasis on teaching critical reading and a deficiency of this ability in teachers as well.<sup>21</sup>

In a number of publications the possibility is mentioned that that elementary teachers may lack literary skills. Only one study reports functional literacy skills of teachers, and again this is from a selected sample of 108 southern teachers.<sup>22</sup> The mean results when teachers were grouped according to jobs ranged from 8.8 grade level to above norm on the Nelson-Denny Reading Test. Lowest scores were associated with teachers of disadvantaged pupils and highest with teachers and administrators of in-service programs.

Lack of knowledge of reading skills by subject area teachers was reported by Braam and Walter.<sup>23</sup> Eighty-one teachers in nine different content areas were surveyed to find the extent of their awareness of necessary reading skills to effectively read subject matter material. Most of the subject area teachers were unaware of the reading skills necessary for students.

There is very little research that focuses specifically on teachers' conceptions of reading. Most of the research on teachers' conceptions must be drawn from outside the reading area, such as instructional practices, in-service programs, and grouping.

One way that specifically focused on conceptions was discussed by Cadenhead. He describes the following in-service technique in which teachers sorted cards to identify their beliefs about reading. His card sorting process consisted of accepting or rejecting reading assumptions that he presented.<sup>24</sup>

The studies in this section presented findings which questioned teachers' knowledge of teaching reading and reading ability. Teachers' conceptions need to be identified because it is believed that the underlying knowledge and conceptions influence their classroom behavior.

#### Diagnostic Teaching of Reading in the Classroom

Guszak defines the diagnostic reading teacher not as a "reading specialist" or as one who works solely with cases of "reading difficulty" or "reading disability," but rather as a teacher in the normal classroom at any grade level or non-graded grouping.<sup>25</sup> He states that the teacher works with a wide variety of reading abilities that span the range from "gifted" to "remedial" levels, and it is not at all certain that

exceptional children can or should be pulled out of the normal classroom.<sup>26</sup>

Strang views diagnostic teaching as the interrelation of evaluation and planning contiguous with instruction. She states that

. . . textbooks on the teaching of reading emphasize planning and evaluation prior to, during, and after instruction to determine the reading status of pupils, to diagnose specific strengths and weaknesses, and reassess pupils progress.<sup>27</sup>

Rosenbury makes student errors the primary source of information for adjusting teaching methods. Problem solving activities alert teachers to seek out new ideas and alternate ways of presenting the information to the problem readers.<sup>28</sup>

Pikulski points out that while a diagnosis of student reading behavior is necessary and helpful, most classroom teachers do not have enough time to thoroughly diagnose the reading of each of their students' reading strategies.<sup>29</sup>

Reading diagnosis baffles teachers. Olshovsky, Andres, and Farr demonstrated in a study which asked teachers to rate second-graders' mastery of reading skills that the teachers were unable, with any degree of consistency, to determine areas of needed instruction.<sup>30</sup>

One frequently cited problem is a lack of adequate teaching and diagnostic materials.<sup>31</sup> It is not clear, however, whether this problem stems from a shortage of materials due to restrictive school budgets or from the teachers' lack of knowledge about the availability and usefulness of materials. Flood and Zehm concluded that in-service programs are essential to aid teachers in their use of reading materials and particularly of diagnostic tests.<sup>32</sup>

A change has occurred in the last decade toward skill development

through "diagnostic and prescriptive reading instruction." A most useful strategy for teaching diagnostically, often cited or discussed in reading circles, is a test-teach-test cycle that is open-ended and continuous.

Harris reports that teachers in such a teaching plan often complain about the time required for testing and record keeping. The temptation to stress highly specific goals which are easy to test sometimes distorts the program into over-emphasis on decoding. In addition, much time is wasted in rigidly following the idea of pre-testing for every objective.<sup>33</sup> Harris concludes by explaining:

There is a strong temptation to go by the number of correct answers and not inquire how or why the child made his/her errors, so that diagnostic thinking is at a very low level.<sup>34</sup>

Rupley and Blair remark that teachers must adopt a logical and analytical attitude toward instructional practices in order to identify those students who are experiencing difficulty in learning to read. Teachers need to analyze the effectiveness of instructional practices logically and adopt those that appear to improve students' reading ability.<sup>35</sup>

Experience has proved that students with a wide range of concerns, competencies, and enthusiasms, and with widely differing self-concepts, learning styles, goals, and purposes do not learn the same thing at the same time in the same way. Based on observational and interview data from elementary public school classrooms, Harste and Burke indicated that one can identify distinctive and consistent ways in which students approach learning to read and in which teachers approach reading instruction.<sup>36</sup> Using an information processing model, these authors identify the theoretical orientation of student and teacher by studying

decision-making, goal selection, and information use. Instruments and procedures have been developed to study these processes in reading and reading instruction. Findings have been reported on three common and current views of reading: Sound-symbol or decoding orientation, skills orientation using the four language arts in developing skill hierarchies, and whole language orientation. Harste and Burke indicate that student reading performance in part mirrors the nature of instruction and also reflects his/her history of instruction.<sup>37</sup>

This section presented the findings of studies dealing with aspects of diagnostic teaching in the classroom. The principle of diagnostic teaching seems to be generally accepted but not widely practiced. The amount of material to be covered, the number of students, and the time available for instruction seem to be the main rationalization given by teachers for not using a diagnostic teaching model. There are few research studies that deal directly with the topic of diagnostic teaching in the classroom, especially those offering suggestions and guidelines for working with students experiencing difficulty in reading.

#### Teacher Education--Reading

The professional growth of reading teachers is a vital element in any formula for improved reading instruction. The formulation of new theory, the development of new teaching materials, and the improvement of instructional methodologies are useless if their benefits are not incorporated into classroom teachers' perspectives of teaching reading. Consequently, it is appropriate to review teacher education to search for clues about how it attempts to enhance the professional expertise of the teachers' skill in teaching reading.

From an examination of college and university programs in 1961, Austin and Morrison reported that 3 per cent of these programs did not require prospective elementary school teachers to enroll in any course dealing with the teaching of reading and that when reading was taught with other subjects, as in 50 per cent of the colleges, only a fraction of the time was devoted to reading. Also, intermediate grade reading skills were usually omitted or treated cursorily.<sup>38</sup>

A follow-up on this study in 1977 indicates that prospective elementary teachers received at least three semester hours in reading instruction in 94 per cent of colleges and universities surveyed. Many colleges required a second or third course in reading, including content that was formerly taught at the graduate level. Basic reading courses frequently included intermediate and upper grade content and techniques of instruction. There were also more courses, emphasis on competency based performances, greater use of public school setting, and more observation and tutorial exposures.<sup>39</sup>

Dinnan and Hatner used a combination of five tests and inventories to assess educational background and competency of students (N=103) one semester away from student teaching.<sup>40</sup> Results showed that many of the individuals had problems in various reading skills, performed poorly on reading tests, and did limited personal reading. They argue for upgrading both the selection and preparation of future teachers. Unfortunately, a control group was not used, so comparison between this group and other college students were not made.

A survey of 488 elementary school teachers in Austin, Texas,<sup>41</sup> concerning their initial and continuing preparation for teaching reading,

indicates the following areas where a need for information was identified:

1. diagnosing individual instructional needs
2. meeting the needs of the disabled reader
3. methodology

This supports the previously cited studies on diagnostic teaching in the classroom, reinforcing the need for improvement in training reading teachers.

In summarizing research on the relative effectiveness of reading programs, Rutherford states that no approach emerged as superior, but that the value of a good teacher was continually revealed.<sup>42</sup> He listed questions concerning good teachers that he suggests should be answered, such as:

1. What are the cognitive and affective teacher traits that contribute to maximum student achievement?
2. What type of training and/or experience are necessary to develop these traits in teachers?
3. What are the aspects of teacher performance that promote success?<sup>43</sup>

In reviewing the area of pre-service education, Tyler states:

The primary function of preservice education is to help the individual develop a rough cognitive map of the phenomena of learning, teaching, and professional ethics, and to give him or her some practice in using the map so that they can get the feel of professionalism. Most students are not expected to have a well-developed cognitive map by the time of graduation, nor will most of them be skilled in its use.<sup>44</sup>

Smith, Otto, and Harty surveyed 225 elementary teachers in an attempt to discover guidelines for improving pre-service and in-service training of teachers in reading. Responses to their four-item questionnaire were classified on the basis of each respondent's present teaching level (primary or intermediate) and years of service as a teacher. They



found that primary teachers were more satisfied with their pre-service training than were the intermediate teachers. Both groups felt the need for more information about providing for the disabled reader and diagnosing individual instructional needs.<sup>45</sup>

Adams did a study to analyze teacher responses to a questionnaire designed to present a comprehensive statement of teachers' instructional needs in reading. The questionnaire consisted of multiple-choice, agree-disagree, and four point value items organized into six major categories: (1) nature of the reading program, (2) readiness and motivation, (3) individualization and ways of working, (4) teaching the reading skills, (5) materials and resources, and (6) evaluation. Two hundred sixty-eight randomly selected teachers from fifty two randomly selected public elementary schools in Florida responded. The respondents identified twenty eight aspects of reading instruction as areas in which greater understanding was needed. The areas of greatest need occurred in the diagnosis and treatment of corrective and/or remedial reading problems and in ways of meeting individual differences.<sup>46</sup>

This section presented the findings of studies dealing with pre-service and in-service teacher education in reading. The inadequacy of pre-service education, clinical supervision, and in-service training in reading remains a concern of teachers. Teachers are also concerned about specifics, such as how to individualize instruction, motivate students, find time to do their work, understand and teach the student experiencing difficulties in reading, and obtain suitable materials. However, there is strikingly little in the literature which stresses the importance of teacher understanding of children in psychological growth and development

terms and of teacher recognition of what children bring to the reading situation. The teaching of reading for many teachers may be a required performance and a mechanical skill lacking in significance, interest, pleasure, or meaning. Thus, the significance of reading is not communicated to students.

One gains the impression that research in pre-service and in-service programs fails to meet the current needs of the profession. There is a definite lack in the literature of research which assesses the needs of teachers, especially as it relates to students experiencing difficulties in reading, and then bases the pre-service or in-service program directly upon those needs.

#### Literature on Ethnographic Techniques

Literally hundreds of studies of the characteristics of pupils have been conducted, and an almost equal number comparing methods and materials. On the other hand, very few have focused on the teacher contribution in reading, specifically a teacher's contribution in teaching the student who is experiencing difficulties in reading.

The premise that classroom teachers need to study the effectiveness of their reading programs was put forth quite clearly by Helen Robinson, who pointed out the differences between experiments and research. An experiment is a test or trial in order to find out something about a tentative procedure. Research is careful, unbiased investigation of a problem in reading in which the results are based on demonstrable data.<sup>47</sup> Robinson warned that the two should not be confused and that the experiments at the classroom level were needed to test the results of research and to investigate and understand reading behaviors

and reading instruction so that important and not trivial questions would be studied in more vigorous research. Thus teachers should be involved in that experimentation which can become the heart of extensive research.<sup>48</sup>

At the close of the tenth volume year, the editors of the Reading Research Quarterly chose to identify and seriously question the methodological incarceration that besieges the field of reading research. Their major argument suggested that although studies were becoming increasingly sophisticated in both design and analysis, research in reading generally failed to address some of the more important questions in the reading arena. They averred:

More disconcerting is that many of the studies published each year are both myopic and narrow in scope. . . . At times it almost appears as if researchers are saying that they know what the issues and problems are and that the answer is to develop more elaborate research designs and statistical treatment of their data. . . . However, in our contacts with reading researchers, they often lament the fact that their research designs and statistical treatments fail to help them uncover new relationships, or to study the more profound questions and crucial issues related to reading.<sup>49</sup>

Ruth Strang, who used case study methods in reading research, noted that problems and limitations of traditional research methods were employed to analyze the dimensions of the reading process. Her criticisms were as follows:

1. Coefficients of correlation not only fail to indicate causality, but more specifically, they do not help identify the multitude of forces impinging upon children;
2. Factor analyses help to sort; but only through rearrangement of existing correlates. Such techniques do not help to identify or illuminate new factors;
3. Surveys pool widespread ignorance--they reiterate unverified and possibly erroneous opinion. They lend authority to unvalidated procedures; and finally,

4. Comparable match group designs rely on measurement of outcomes. They do not account for differing learner rates, learner styles, contextual variables, teacher roles, affect, values, and personalities that make classrooms unique. Furthermore, comparable groups are never comparable--there are always a host of uncontrollable variables.<sup>50</sup>

According to Wolf and Tymitz, ethnography is an analytical process involving the disciplined and systematic uncovering of human behavior and socio-cultural interactive patterns within any environment or milieu. It is imaginative reconstruction. It involves the collection of data from a variety of sources, probing for the subtle and underlying meaning of the data at every step. It culminates in the interpretation of the whole phenomenon under study on the basis of clues provided by the constituent parts. Ethnography is typically more issue generative or hypothesis generative than the case study approach.<sup>51</sup>

Ethnographic research in reading would involve multiple data collection strategies, relying substantially on participant observation. This mode involves sustained interaction between researcher and subjects within culture, environment, or milieu under investigation. It is comprised of a congeries of techniques generally classifiable as (1) interviews, both formal and informal, retrospective and introspective; (2) observation, both structured and unstructured; and (3) a range of obtrusive and unobtrusive measures. The ultimate aim of these procedures would be to provide accurate, detailed analysis of educational settings where reading occurs.<sup>52</sup>

Ethnography is not just a new fad; rather, it is part of a long respected research tradition that, for various reasons, has remained outside the mainstream of educational research.<sup>53</sup> Wolcott reports that the ethnographer's unique contribution is his commitment to understand and convey how it is to "walk in someone else's shoes" and to "tell it like it is." However, he must also attend to how the participants themselves say it ought to be, typically investigating actions and beliefs in a number of categories of human behavior.<sup>54</sup>

At a workshop in Exploring Qualitative/Quantitative Research Methodology in Education, Erickson reveals that "qualitative or ethnographic" research claims to be able to tell us what the game is ("holistic analysis"), what attributes of "things" in the game are functionally relevant to playing the game, and what the game-related purposes of the players are.<sup>55</sup> He further explains that what qualitative research does best and most essentially is to describe "key incidents" in some relation to a wider social content.<sup>56</sup>

Ethnographic research is much like quantitative research in that it has a long tradition within which investigators are working continually to refine and develop effective and appropriate research methods.<sup>57</sup> Wilson states:

The qualitative research enterprise depends on the ability of the researcher to make himself a sensitive research instrument by transcending his own perspective and becoming acquainted with the perspectives of those he is studying.<sup>58</sup>

Strang employed several interesting procedures, such as unstructured interviews and background questionnaires in her research.<sup>59</sup> Wolf and Tymitz state that Strang's work closely approximates the ethnographic paradigm which they believe offers the most promise for the future of reading research.<sup>60</sup>

In taking a close look at the literature, one can see that the ethnographic paradigm demands the amassing of large quantities of evidence without necessarily testing preconceived hypotheses or "a priori" questions. Wolf and Tymitz conclude that the ethnographic techniques require insightful and inductive analysis, with a heavy emphasis given to clinical reasoning and iterative examination. It does not rely on large samples; in fact, exploring settings that involve few teachers or

children are desirable--particularly at first. What is far more critical is the intensity of the exploration. The careful probing to identify frames of reference relevant to both the teacher and the child is clearly more important than statistical treatment or display. It also provides the framework for examining how teachers process information concerning learners' attributes, cognitive behaviors, and emotional signals. It would be incumbent on the ethnographic researcher to tease those subtleties from intensive teacher interviews.<sup>61</sup>

The literature review of ethnographic techniques provides a framework for the procedures used in this study. This method allows for a closeness to the social situation and is conducive to gathering qualitative descriptive data.

## FOOTNOTES

### CHAPTER II

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<sup>16</sup>R. Emans, "Teacher Evaluations of Reading Skills and Individualized Reading," The Elementary English Reviews, XLII (1965), 258-260.

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<sup>30</sup>J. Olshovsky, N. Andrews, and R. Farr, "Convergent and Discriminant Validity of Informal Assessment of Reading Skills," P. L. Nacke (ed.), Twenty-third Yearbook of National Reading Conference in Interaction: Research and Practice in College-Adult Reading (Clemson, S.C.: Clemson University, 1974).

<sup>31</sup>James Flood and Stanley Zehm, "Instructional Needs of Reading Teachers in the Primary Grades," Reading Improvement (Spring, 1975), pp. 51-55.

<sup>32</sup>Ibid.

<sup>33</sup>Albert J. Harris, How to Increase Reading Ability (New York: David McKay, 1970), p. 32.

<sup>34</sup>Ibid.

<sup>35</sup>William H. Rupley and Timothy R. Blair, ERIC REPORT: "Remedial Reading Instruction," The Reading Teacher (March, 1977), p. 708.

<sup>36</sup>J. C. Harste and C. L. Burke, "A New Hypothesis for Reading Teacher Research: Both the Teaching and Learning of Reading is Theoretically Based" (unpublished paper, 1976).

<sup>37</sup>Ibid.

<sup>38</sup>M. C. Austin and C. Morrison, The Torch Lighters: Tomorrow's Teachers of Reading (Cambridge: Harvard Graduate School of Education, 1961).

<sup>39</sup>C. Morrison and M. C. Austin, The Torch Lighters Revisited (Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1977).

<sup>40</sup>J. A. Dinnan and L. E. Hafner, "Reading Interests and Abilities of College Students," Reading Improvement (Winter, 1970), pp. 62-65.

<sup>41</sup>W. L. Rutherford and S. W. Weaver, "Preferences of Elementary Teachers for Pre-Service and In-Service Training in the Teaching of Reading," The Journal of Educational Research (February, 1974), pp. 271-275.

<sup>42</sup>W. L. Rutherford, "The Success Ingredient in Reading Instruction," Elementary English (February, 1971), pp. 224-226.

<sup>43</sup>Ibid.

<sup>44</sup>Ralph W. Tyler, "Accountability and Teacher Performance: Self-directed and Externally-directed Professional Improvement," in The In-Service Education of Teachers, ed. by Louis Rubin (Boston: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1978), p. 142.

<sup>45</sup>R. J. Smith, W. Otto, and K. Harty, "Elementary Teachers' Preference for Pre-Service and In-Service Training in the Teaching of Reading," Journal of Educational Research (July-August, 1970), pp. 445-449.

<sup>46</sup>M. L. Adams, "Teachers' Instructional Needs in Teaching Reading," Reading Teacher (January, 1964), pp. 260-264.

<sup>47</sup>Helen M. Robinson, ed., Innovation and Change in Reading Instruction. Sixty-seventh Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1968), p. 407.

<sup>48</sup>Ibid.

<sup>49</sup>Roger Farr and Sam Weintraub, Editorial: "Methodological Incarceration," Reading Research Quarterly, X, No. 4 (1974-1975), 549.

<sup>50</sup>Ruth Strang, "Reactions to Research on Reading," Educational Forum (Winter, 1962), pp. 187-192.

<sup>51</sup>Robert Wolf and Barbara Tymitz, "Ethnography and Reading: Matching Inquiry Mode to Process," Reading Research Quarterly, Vol. XII, No. 1 (1976-1977), unpagged.

<sup>52</sup>Ibid.

<sup>53</sup>S. Wilson, "The Use of Ethnographic Techniques in Educational Research," Review of Educational Research (Winter, 1977), p. 263.

<sup>54</sup>Harry Wolcott, "Criteria for an Ethnographic Approach to Research in Schools," Human Organization (Summer, 1975), p. 111.

<sup>55</sup>Opinions expressed by Frederick Erickson, Harvard University, "Some Approaches to Inquiry in School/Community Ethnograph" (unpublished paper), p. 6.

<sup>56</sup>Ibid.

<sup>57</sup>Wilson, p. 253.

<sup>58</sup>Ibid., p. 261.

<sup>59</sup>Strang, "Reactions to Research on Reading," p. 187.

<sup>60</sup>Wolf and Tymitz.

<sup>61</sup>Ibid.

## CHAPTER III

### METHOD

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain classroom teachers' perspectives of students experiencing difficulties in reading. More specifically, it explored how classroom teachers interpret their roles, make decisions, and act upon these decisions when dealing with students experiencing difficulties in reading. This study was further guided by the following exploratory questions:

1. What elements constitute these classroom teachers' perspectives of students experiencing difficulties in reading?
2. What are the assumptions these teachers make about the students that support their perspective?
3. Which variables influence the teachers' perspectives in their role in diagnosing and teaching students experiencing difficulties in reading?
4. How do these teachers synthesize the skills of diagnostic teaching into their perspective?

To accomplish these tasks, a descriptive study was designed utilizing in-depth interviews and participant observation research to describe the interview data. In this chapter, the research method will be examined through an explanation of construct theory, including a definition of perspective. The implications that evolve from construct theory for in-depth interviews and participant observation research will be described. The procedures used in this study will be presented.

### Basic Suppositions of the Theory of Personal Constructs

There are several respects in which construct theory may seem strange to those encountering it for the first time. Kelly summarizes them thus:

Like other theories, the psychology of personal constructs is the implementation of a philosophical assumption. In this case the assumption is that whatever nature may be, or howsoever the quest for truth will turn out in the end, the events we face today are subject to as great a variety of constructions as our wits will enable us to contrive. This is not to say that one construction is as good as any other, nor is it to deny that at some infinite point in time human vision will behold reality out to the utmost reaches of existence. But it does remind us that all our present perceptions are open to question and reconsideration and it does broadly suggest that even the most obvious occurrences of everyday life might appear utterly transformed if we were inventive enough to construe them differently.<sup>1</sup>

Kelly also puts the idea of "role" into perspective as follows:

Role can be understood in terms of what the person himself is doing rather than in terms of his circumstances. Personal construct theory tries to put role within the context of something a person himself is doing and it springs from a notion that one may attempt to understand others in terms of their outlooks just as a personal construct theory psychologist tries to understand human beings in terms of their outlooks . . . men who seem to understand and do it by active inquiry, using their own behavior not as something to act out, but as a means of understanding their world.<sup>2</sup>

Kelly many times insisted that he would prefer to be remembered, if at all, not for the invention of personal construct theory but for "Kelly's first principle." Bannister and Fransella share the following insights into the first principle:

. . . Kelly's first principle was the simple statement, "if you don't know what is wrong with a patient, ask him, he may tell you."<sup>3</sup>

It seems likely that out of this joke Kelly invented the technique of person assessment which he called self-characterization. This technique is a format which invites the person to say something about himself or herself. Thus, the person makes sense of his world by acting toward

him or herself and others through self-characterization. These self-characterizations allow the person to construct his/her actions. These self-characterizations, also called a perspective, depend on a person's definition of the situation.

Personal construct theory and self-characterization have implications for the educational process itself. One of the many problems encountered by teachers is that of the child who is not learning to read as he should. Many teachers seek the explanation for such failure in the defects of the child and not in his interaction with home and school.<sup>4</sup> The most popular explanation given by teachers was that of lack of intelligence, which tends to imply that there is little that can be done. Ravenette reports who Kelly was once asked how his theory related to the problem of a child failing to learn to read and how he replied:

Find out if the teacher likes the child, and at the same time is not forcing the child into a role which is inappropriate, and is not depriving the child of the means of developing his own identity in a constructive way, nor using the child to meet his own needs.<sup>5</sup>

The elaboration of the way a teacher understands and interprets the world is achieved by seeing through the child's eye. The teacher constructs his/her actions depending on the interpretation of the situation.

#### Summary

The background and development of personal construct theory was George Kelly. Bannister and Fransella have described this theory in great detail, along with developing some methodological and philosophical implications of the theory. The basic supposition of the theory is a personal construction or representation of some aspect of reality that is the result of an individual's interpretation of his world.

Following from this, self-characterization is developed by roles or perspectives. A perspective, being a combination of a person's beliefs and behaviors, defines his/her world.

In this study, part of the supposition was that classroom teachers develop a perspective of students experiencing difficulty in reading. The perspective enables classroom teachers to understand their world of working with these students and to construct appropriate actions. The problem posed in this study was to look at the elements that constitute classroom teachers' perspectives and to describe and explore that perspective. In order to do this, in-depth interviews and participant observation methods were used to describe how classroom teachers view students with reading problems.

#### In-Depth Interviews: Research Implications

Using the technique of in-depth interviews provided a means of getting at the classroom teachers' perspectives. Bussis, Chittenden, and Amarel used the interview as a method for collecting information regarding teacher conceptions. They state;

. . . the strength of the interview as a research instrument was equated with its ability to elicit personal opinions, knowledge, and understandings--the type of evidence necessary to obtain a general picture of personal constructs and construct systems.<sup>6</sup>

The major interest of the interview used by Bussis, Chittenden, and Amarel was not the specific behaviors described by the teachers, but "what the described behaviors represent."<sup>7</sup> In a summary statement of the research of Bussis, Chittenden, and Amarel, the evidence indicates that an interview methodology is a sensitive approach to the study of underlying constructs about teaching and learning.<sup>8</sup>

The in-depth interview procedure is a way to uncover teachers' perspectives and these perspectives of what is important will influence teachers' classroom behavior.

#### Participant Observation: Research Implications

While this study did not follow the extended period of time associated with most participant observation studies, various ethnographic techniques were used during the six-week period that the researcher spent in the field that resemble an extended period of observation.

The participant observation method was developed by anthropologists as they lived in a particular society and made observations of that society for a considerable length of time. The anthropologists kept notes which were later analyzed and descriptions were written about the aspects of that society. Two research studies using participant observation methods will be reviewed. In a book, Inside High School, Philip Cusick<sup>9</sup> studied a small group of adolescents in a high school setting. He interviewed students, observed and participated in various social activities, in order to describe how their behavior affected the school as an organization.

In the book Street Corner Society, Whyte studied the daily life structure of an Italian slum. His studies lasted almost four years and resulted in an explanation of the social structure of informal groups of "corner boys."<sup>10</sup>

As seen in these two studies, participant observation methods reveal patterns of behavior within two different social settings. The researchers interpreted events being observed and participated to some extent in the daily lives of a small group of adolescents.

In the present study the researcher used the method of participant observer to investigate classroom teachers' perspectives of students experiencing difficulties in reading during a six-week Graduate Reading Diagnostic Institute. A personal relationship was established with the teachers. The researcher collected various types of descriptive data through in-depth interviews, observations, and informal discussions. This approach added descriptive support for these classroom teachers' perspectives of the students experiencing difficulties in reading.

#### Selection of the Population and Sample

Since the purpose of this study was to describe and explore classroom teachers' perspectives of students experiencing difficulties in reading, it seemed reasonable to study classroom teachers as they teach students experiencing difficulties in reading. Therefore, Phase One of the study was conducted while the teachers were attending a Graduate Diagnostic Reading Institute, a Continuing Education Program offered by Michigan State University. Several off-campus Reading Institutes are made available each summer and the researcher consulted with Dr. George Sherman, director of the Summer Institutes, and a site for this study was selected, with the main criteria being enrollment and consent of the instructor. The graduate committee suggested that ten teachers be included in this phase of the study, and it would be advantageous to have more than ten teachers enrolled in case there would be some that would not be interested in participating in the study. It also seemed reasonable to conduct a second phase in which a second group of teachers would be interviewed. The teachers in the second phase would all be in the same school and would not be involved in the Summer



Diagnostic Reading Institute. The rationale for selecting a second group of teachers was to describe the teachers' perspectives from within a single school faculty and also to describe and explain their perspectives apart from those that received specific training in working with problem readers. The graduate committee also suggested that ten teachers be included in this phase and that they be teachers in grades three, four, and five. It was also recommended that teachers be selected that have more than two years of teaching and a member of the faculty for two years.

The teachers in both Phase One and Phase Two were not selected randomly. Instead, they all volunteered, showing an interest in reading instruction as it relates to the problem reader.

As indicated in Table 1, the teachers in Phase One span the grades from 1-8, with one special reading teacher. Those teachers in Phase Two were teaching in a middle school building. Table 2 presents the years of teaching of the teachers involved in the study, with the average for both groups being close to ten years. There was one male teacher in each phase of the study.

#### Data Collection

In Phase One of the study the data were collected using the interview cards included in Appendix A. The interview questions are the following:

1. In your classroom there are students who are experiencing difficulty in reading. Picture one of these students in your mind.
2. Briefly describe \_\_\_\_\_ reading behavior.  
What are some of \_\_\_\_\_ specific reading problems?

TABLE 1

## GRADE LEVEL(S) AT THE TIME OF THE STUDY

Grade Level(s)	Phase One	Phase Two	Total
1	1	-	1
2	2	-	2
1-2	1	-	1
2-3	2	-	2
3	-	4	4
3-4	1	-	1
4	-	3	3
5	-	3	3
6	1	-	1
7-8	1	-	1
Reading teacher	1	-	1
	10	10	20

TABLE 2

## YEARS OF TEACHING AT THE TIME OF THE STUDY

Years	Phase One	Phase Two	Total
1-5	3	3	6
6-10	2	4	6
11-15	3	2	5
16-20	1	1	2
21-25	1	-	1
	10	10	20

3. What materials and procedures did you use to diagnose \_\_\_\_\_ reading performance?
4. How much time do you devote to \_\_\_\_\_ in direct teaching of reading daily?
5. Briefly describe what typically happens during your reading period in terms of what \_\_\_\_\_ does?
6. Of all the various treatment procedures you had in mind, what materials did you use this past school year to remedy \_\_\_\_\_ reading problems?
7. If you were going to measure \_\_\_\_\_ achievement in reading, what information would you want collected?
8. How do you feel about working with \_\_\_\_\_?
9. If you could start the year over with \_\_\_\_\_, what would you do to help \_\_\_\_\_ achieve competency and satisfaction in reading?
10. Thinking back over the people and resources you have had during this year, what or whom do you consider have been major sources of help and support in accomplishing your teaching objectives with students who are experiencing difficulty in reading?
11. If there were no constraints on money, time, and materials, what would you do to improve the quality of reading instruction in your own classroom, your school, and in the school district?
12. What are some of the sources that influenced your development of a conception of diagnostic teaching of reading?
13. What are some of the guiding principles that influence the

decisions you make about the students experiencing difficulty in reading?

14. How do you define your role in teaching students who are experiencing difficulty in reading?

15. Looking back to your formal education, what do you think was the most valuable part of your education? What was the least valuable?

16. If you have the opportunity to take an extended period of time off for learning, what would you do? How would you go about it?

This set of interview cards was developed under the guidance of Dr. William K. Durr and input from four teachers involved in the pilot study in April, 1977.

These sixteen cards were used in the interview with each of the ten teachers at the beginning of the six-week Graduate Diagnostic Reading Institute. During the Institute, the researcher took on the role of an observer as a participant. In this type of role the researcher identifies the purpose of her presence and to some degree shares in the activities and enters into interaction with the other participants. The purpose was to get a view of each of the ten teachers in an instructional setting. The researcher played a neutral but active role, creating a climate in which discussion could freely take place. This method allowed the researcher to catch the process of interpretation of events of the teachers being observed. A personal relationship was established with the teachers. It was through observations, in-depth interviews, and informal discussions that the researcher collected various types of descriptive data.

At the conclusion of the six weeks, the researcher interviewed the ten teachers, using an unstructured interview. It was during this interview that the researcher asked the teachers to concentrate on a group of students instead of one student that was experiencing difficulties in reading. Using the names of these students the researcher generated the questions along the same line as those listed on the interview cards. This provided the researcher the freedom to probe deeper and isolate the teachers' perspectives and offer descriptive support for those areas which seem dominant.

In Phase Two of the study the data were collected using the sixteen cards as previously mentioned in Phase One. This first interview took place in the classroom, teachers' lounge, or library, depending on the time of day that each interview was scheduled. Six weeks later, a second interview was scheduled. Since this was during vacation time, all of these interviews took place in the teachers' homes. In a relaxed setting the researcher used the same type of unstructured interview that was described at the end of the six-week Institute. Again, the researcher asked the teachers to focus their attention on a group of students experiencing difficulties in reading. These were students they had in their classroom during the past school year. Having the names of these students on cards in front of them, the researcher had the freedom to probe and isolate what seemed to be each teacher's perspective.

All of the interviews were taped and transcribed. The transcripts provided the basis for the descriptions included in Chapter IV along with the notes and observations of significant instructional events and discussions that were collected during the participant observation phase of the research.

### Time Schedule

Phase One--third week of June 1977 (first interview)  
last week of July, 1977 (second interview)  
June 20-July 29--participant observation

Phase Two--second week of June, 1977 (first interview)  
third week of July (second interview)

Nature of the Graduate Diagnostic  
Reading Institute  
Dr. George Sherman, Director

### Goals and Objectives

The overall goal of the Institute is to help teachers develop both the confidence and commitment to become professional decision-makers who can accept that role as necessary for successfully teaching the child who is experiencing difficulties in reading. Content includes theory and technique in both diagnostic and prescriptive behaviors appropriate to either classroom or clinic.

The Institute provides a "hands on" experience in which both observation and test data will supply information and insight which in turn will be subjected to the ultimate test of practicality; that is, does it help the child learn to read.

To achieve this goal, teachers

1. learn to select appropriate tests and observational situations by knowing what to look for.
2. learn to accurately administer and score diagnostic and achievement tests of perceptual, cognitive, and affective behaviors.
3. learn to perceptively interpret reading learning behaviors as they are exhibited in tests and test observations.

4. learn to write a clear and concise report of the findings and conclusions for the test observation situations with specific directions for remediation at whatever disability is found.
5. operationalize the prescriptions developed in the diagnostic report.
6. prepare instructional materials, techniques, and guides to the needs of a problem reader.
7. do daily tutoring of a child using these prepared materials, directions, and techniques.
8. evaluate daily progress and modify instruction as needed.

Text: Eldon E. Ekwall, Diagnosis and Remediation of the Disabled Reader (Boston, Massachusetts: Allyn and Bacon, Inc., 1976).

Tests

1. Slosson Oral Reading Test
2. Dolch Word Lists
3. Gates-MacGinitie Reading Tests
4. Iowa Tests of Basic Skills
5. Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulties
6. Gates-McKillop Reading Diagnostic Tests
7. Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test
8. Slosson Intelligence Test
9. Cognitive Abilities Test
10. Interest Inventory

In the following chapters the descriptions will be presented with the analysis and exploratory data to support the conclusions.

Given the purposes of this study guided by four exploratory questions, the method and the presentation of the data, the reader is left to draw his/her own conclusions.



## FOOTNOTES

### CHAPTER III

<sup>1</sup>G. A. Kelly, "A Brief Introduction to Personal Construct Theory," in Perspective in Personal Construct Theory, ed. by D. Bannister (New York: Academic Press, 1970), pp. 1-2.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 78.

<sup>4</sup>A. T. Ravenette, Dimensions of Reading Difficulty (New York: Pergamon, 1968), p. 78.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid., p. 77.

<sup>6</sup>A. Bussis, E. Chittenden, and M. Amarel, Beyond Surface Curriculum: An Interview of Teachers' Understandings (Boulder, Colorado: Westview Press, 1976), p. 42.

<sup>7</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

<sup>8</sup>Ibid., p. 171.

<sup>9</sup>Philip Cusick, Inside High School (New York: Holt, Rinehart, and Winston, Inc., 1973).

<sup>10</sup>William Whyte, Street Corner Society (Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1943).

## CHAPTER IV

### PRESENTATION OF THE DATA

#### Introduction

The purpose of this study was to describe and explore classroom teachers' perspectives of students experiencing difficulties in reading. The descriptions are presented in two phases. Phase One includes descriptions of each of the ten teachers as they responded to the interviews before and after the Graduate Reading Diagnostic Institute. Descriptions of the insights gained during the time that the researcher was a participant observer of these ten teachers as they participated in a six-week Graduate Diagnostic Reading Institute are also included. Each interview concludes with a summary analysis of each teacher's perspective of the students experiencing difficulties in reading.

Phase Two includes descriptions of a second group of ten teachers that were all on the same faculty and did not participate in the Summer Diagnostic Reading Institute. Each of the ten teachers was interviewed at two different settings. The first interview took place during the last weeks of the school year, while the second interview took place during the summer recess six weeks later. Each interview concludes with a summary analysis of each teacher's perspective of the students experiencing difficulties in reading.

The summary analysis of each teacher's perspective includes his/her responses to three areas:

1. How did they describe students with reading problems?
2. What diagnostic techniques were used to solve the students' reading problems?
3. What feelings were expressed as they coped with students experiencing difficulties in reading?

Each phase will list the teachers numerically in the order of their interviews, thus insuring the anonymity of the teachers involved in this study.

The format used for the first interview of each phase is included in Appendix A. These sixteen interview cards formed the descriptions that are included in this chapter. The format for the second interview of each phase, which took place six weeks later, followed an unstructured interview using probing techniques to obtain the data. The researcher used the information contained on the cards and asked each teacher to write on separate cards the names of students experiencing difficulties in reading. Asking the teachers to talk about those students that were in their classroom the previous school year provided a focus for discussion around groups of students. These descriptions of the second interview are also included in this chapter.

## Graduate Reading Diagnostic Institute

### Background

Ten classroom teachers selected as subjects in Phase One of this study were enrolled in a Graduate Reading Diagnostic Institute. These Summer Institutes are offered each summer by the College of Education through its Continuing Education Programs at Michigan State University. The Institutes are scheduled for a six-week period four hours per day, five days a week. Dr. George Sherman, director of the Summer Institutes, was helpful in the selection of a suitable Institute for conducting this phase of the study. Sixteen classroom teachers were enrolled in the Institute that was selected for this study and ten of those classroom teachers volunteered as subjects to be interviewed and observed in depth.

The instructor for the Institute was familiar with the design of this study and willingly consented to have the researcher become a participant observer and interview the ten teachers selected as subjects.

Before the beginning sessions, arrangements were made for the first interview, with each of the ten teachers meeting individually with the researcher. The interview cards (Appendix A) were used during the first interview. Each interview lasted approximately thirty minutes, and the entire session was recorded on audio tape. During this first interview, each teacher filled out an information form (Appendix B).

### Environmental Setting

The site for the Institute was an elementary school building located in a residential suburb. All lecture and group sessions were held in the school library. Teachers met with their students for testing and teaching sessions in various classrooms in the school building. Classroom teachers and the instructor had access to all the facilities that were in this elementary school which included library books, audiovisual equipment, ditto machine, and supplies.

### Instructional Setting

The following daily schedule was observed each day of the Institute:

#### Daily Schedule June 20-July 29, 1977

- 8:00-9:00 Lecture given by the Institute instructor
- 9:00-10:00 Teacher planning time and individual sessions with the instructor
- 10:00-11:30 Testing and remediation of the problem readers
- 11:30-12:00 Discussion and Feedback Evaluations

Since all the teachers attending this Summer Institute were "on the job classroom teachers," the instructor focused the lectures and discussions around important operational diagnostic procedures for the classroom teacher.

The instructor of the Institute spent time during the first class session discussing the format of the Institute, which included going through the outline and objectives. Introductions and time for getting acquainted were an important part of the first session. It was

during this first session that the researcher informed the teachers of the general purpose of her being a part of the Institute. The purpose given at this point was deliberately vague in order for the researcher to be able to interact with all the teachers and not only those selected to be interviewed and studied in depth. During the first week of the Institute the entire four hours were devoted to lecture and discussion. Since the students experiencing difficulties in reading did not arrive until the second week of the Institute, the instructor used this first week to review various tests that the teachers would be required to administer to the students during the second week.

Along with becoming acquainted with a variety of tests, the instructor used the first week to lecture on the skills of diagnostic teaching.

After the teachers began administering the tests to the students, the hour lecture sessions became discussion sessions that dealt with the problems that the teachers experienced daily in their teaching sessions.

During the first week, the researcher participated to a limited extent during the lecture discussion hour. This participation during the first week allowed the researcher to study the teachers in this setting while setting the groundwork for a rapport of free and open exchange.

The researcher took notes during the discussion times and the following is a sample of the questions that were asked by the teachers involved in this study.

"Is any one model of the reading process better to follow than another?" (Teacher One)

"How would you define reading?" (Teacher Two)

"How do I interpret these test results?" (Teacher Three)

"Which test should I give this student? I don't think he has a very large sight vocabulary." (Teacher Four)

"What is the difference between a formal and an informal test?" (Teacher Five)

"Is the Wepman Test a pure test of auditory discrimination?" (Teacher Six)

"Is it better to start with some positive aspects of the child's reading before going into formal testing?" (Teacher Seven)

"What should be included in a good lesson plan?" (Teacher Eight)

"At what point do you correct a child's errors in reading?" (Teacher Nine)

"How do I say this in the final report?" (Teacher Ten)

Teachers One, Five, and Ten brought up topic discussions that involved the controversies of grouping methods for teaching reading. This reading approach versus that reading approach, and which type of material is best to use with the student experiencing difficulties in reading were issues that came up during the class discussions.

Observing the ten teachers administer various tests and teach remediation lessons gave the researcher a chance to see what took place when the bridge was crossed from instructional theory into teaching practice. Each of the ten teachers worked with two students during the hour and thirty minutes tutoring sessions. These teachers had a chance to practice the skills of administering tests, and for most of them this was their first experience in administering individual tests to problem

readers. Remediation techniques varied as each of the ten teachers began to explore new ways of teaching children experiencing difficulties in reading.

The researcher held a variety of individual conferences when it seemed like an individual dialogue would provide further insights into the decisions they were making regarding their role in teaching problem readers.

At the conclusion of the Institute, each teacher was interviewed in depth for a second time. The format of this interview was unstructured and each teacher was asked to write on a card the names of students they had previously had in their classrooms that were experiencing difficulties in reading. These interview discussions are included in this chapter.



Phase OneTeacher One Interview Data

## First Interview

The student who I am thinking of is very hyperactive. He started out in a reading group with me at the beginning of the year. He is fantastic with sounding words out, but because of his immaturity I had to pull him out of the group and work with him on a one-to-one basis. He can't handle working or being in a group with other children. In November his parents took him on a two-week vacation. He came back for two days and then left again for a month and a half. The parents did the same thing last year when he was in first grade. I told his parents that they were making a mistake, but they didn't care as they wanted him to have fun in life. When he came back he was so far behind everyone else. His main problem is inability to sit still and follow directions.

I started out at the beginning of the year and used the graded oral reading paragraphs and then I went to vocabulary words that were in the back of the book. This is the procedure that I used for diagnosis.

This child could not work independently and he didn't have a partner to pair off with for reading unless it was a higher achieving child that had finished his work and could read with him outside the classroom. I spent more time with him than with any other child; some days it was almost a half hour. If he had a bad morning, he would not come in on time from lunch but would hide in the playground. We went through a period of not giving him recess time. I had a mother come in two days a week and work with him for about twenty minutes.

During the reading period he is supposed to do seat work, reading,

and workbook pages, along with a silent reading assignment, as well as working with me on a one-to-one basis. He never accomplishes all of those things in a morning. The school psychologist that is working with him finally told me to cut the assignments in half and also told me to drop my expectations. I didn't want to do that because I felt academically he's capable; it is just the other problems that have gotten in the way. I finally did drop my expectations and the parents asked me in March if I would retain him in second grade. I wasn't going to give up in March and I kept right on working with him.

The reading program in my school does not allow me to use other materials. I was kept busy testing, teaching skills, and re-testing. I had to chart the students on an individual file card and keep an individual file folder that contained the results of the skills completed. The classroom graph had to be kept up and also charted. I didn't have any outside help. I was so busy keeping up those charts and giving those tests that I didn't have time for anything else. During the reading group time, this student works individually by himself. When a child had a problem all I would do is go back and re-teach the skills. I didn't use any other series except a few supplementary books for afternoon reading time. I used the supplementary books because I felt the vocabulary was excellent. If this child had any specific problems then I would use the regular series and if he didn't understand the skills in the series, then I made games that involved teaching the skills in a fun way.

The reading program is so organized that all I would do is look on the chart and see where he was at and which skills he knew and didn't

know. The charts and graphs give me the necessary information on his day-by-day achievement. I did give him a standardized test but he is not a child to take tests and he didn't score very high on the test. I would also want to find out about his sight vocabulary. He had problems with diagraphs, blends, and short vowels. I would have to work with him on a one-to-one basis to find out specifically where he is having difficulty.

I like working with him, because he's such a character. There's no one in the world that has as much personality as he does. He's probably one of the most considerate children I've ever had, to a point that it's annoying. If someone walked into the room, he was up to the door to answer it before anyone else. He was a real challenge, and I liked working with him.

If I could do the year over again, I would work with him on a one-to-one basis and not correct his errors as much when he was reading orally. I always stopped and corrected him, and he was afraid to read. I don't know if it would make a difference, but I'd like a chance to try again. He would ignore punctuation, endings on words, and would add -ing whenever he felt like it.

I made use of the reading teacher in my school. I referred him to her right away. She said she couldn't take him because his last year's record did not show that he was reading two grades below his level; it showed he was only one and one-half grades behind. The school psychologist had been working with him on his problem. She even gave me a chart to work with, but I felt it was too structured. If he didn't do successful work in each subject, he was punished at

home by mutual agreement that his mother and I had worked out. After December and his vacation, I wasn't getting help from her, so I dropped it because it was aggravating and time-consuming. The reading teacher was probably the most valuable person in the building for me. She did test him, but I didn't get the results until the last week of school. I think she worked as hard as she could have with him and she found pretty much the same things that I did.

If I didn't have any constraints on money, I would go to the district office supply and take materials that I needed to help me with individual students. I've been there many times and so often they tell me that materials that I have requested are for special education. This is so aggravating. I would like to remodel our school library and get a full-time librarian. It is extremely difficult to get good books or materials when you don't have enough help in the library. I would also like a copy machine in the building. I know there are many materials that I'm not familiar with and I'd have to review them first to see which ones I wanted. I know for sure I would get tape recorders, headphones, and an overhead projector.

I've done some reading on my own, but that was mainly when I was taking courses in reading. I wanted to learn more and improve my teaching --I felt I needed more knowledge. I would also sit in the reading group and watch the students. No one gave me any guidelines, no one set any limits. When I began teaching they gave me the key to my room and said I was on my own. New teacher, new classroom, new everything. I used books from the library, but found the librarian very difficult to work with. All second grade teachers were new and the older teachers helped

me more than the reading teacher. I diagnosed the children's problems by listening to them read and used the experience I had received at the university.

We had an in-service day before school started and a new reading program was brought into the district. I would say the older teachers had a harder time understanding it than I did. I took the manuals home, read them, and followed the guide. The older teachers didn't want to do it because it was so much work. I did not know about other programs so I thought it was fantastic. This series is a lot of work, but I think it paid off; my kids learned to read. I was given the understanding that you get your kids through the books as fast as you can. My kids were finished with the series the latter part of March because I pushed reading and covered the material. My students were in supplemental books above grade level except for this one student that I have been talking about.

My role in teaching the student that is experiencing difficulty is like having the world on my shoulders. I think it's up to me to give them the direction they need and if they don't read I think it's my fault. I still don't know to this day what things I could have done differently with him. I still blame myself and I feel that it's up to me to teach the child to read. My role is to find out his problems and as soon as I know what they are start teaching the student as soon as possible. It may mean calling in extra mothers to come in and work with a particular student having difficulty.

I did not learn anything in college. I really think the education system should be revised. Classes should be more practical. When

you get out, you're left with different theoretical ideas and it's up to you to decide which is the best approach. I think the education department needs to give the college student more direction. I want to know what the experts are thinking. I had an excellent student teaching experience. I was on my own, which was excellent. The pre-service education program doesn't give you enough independence, because when you get out teaching you are left doing many things on your own. I didn't know what a CA 60 was before I taught. The college student should be familiar with doing a classroom inventory, ordering supplies, and writing out requisition forms. She should be acquainted with the best materials. I didn't know anything about ordering materials and the teachers in my building didn't have time to sit down and explain to me. The principal was never around when I needed help.

Reading fascinates me because when I was younger I had problems reading. I hated to read. My sister is a genius and reads everything she can get her hands on. I just didn't want to be bothered when I was younger; maybe it's because I saw her reading so much and I rebelled. I don't know. I would like to travel to other countries and live there and learn the life-styles of other countries. These are the kinds of experiences that you can bring back to the students in your classroom.

I've only been in a classroom for one year, and the most important thing to me is my teaching files, and I'm working hard to fill them up because without them you're nothing. I have spent many hours after school trying to gather materials together, but I'm just not familiar enough with the variety of materials available.

## Teacher One: Second Interview

These students were in my lowest reading group. This little guy was doing real well. He had remedial reading with the reading teacher and he's doing fantastic. This one needs remedial reading this summer and I don't know if he will get it or not. This student lacks a lot in comprehension. I worked with this student individually. He will be retained this next year because he wasn't in school long enough to learn anything. His parents want him to enjoy life rather than go to school. They asked me to retain him. He's always missed a couple of months every year. I worked with him on a one-to-one basis because the make-up work wouldn't allow him to work with other students. He's just too hyperactive, and too immature. He is seeing a school psychologist and has for a couple of years.

I gave these students the graded oral reading paragraphs at the beginning of the year. I asked them questions after they read and counted up their errors. Those that could sound out words were put in one group and those that couldn't were put in another group. Some of them wouldn't read and they were very slow. It took them about five minutes to read a page and I knew they had to be grouped together. This student started out in the middle group but couldn't make it because he was just gone too much, so I had to work with him on a one-to-one basis. This student is an excellent oral reader, faster than most students, but he doesn't comprehend, so I put him back into the slow group. Also, he has problems at home and has run away several times. There have been two marriages mixed together; his older brother was always in trouble and he's just had so many things going on this

year he couldn't handle it. I had to put him back with more direction. The groups change often. If I found a child all of a sudden getting his skills and he was doing really well, I moved him up. It happened to five of these kids, but I was pressured with this one. His mother was a teacher and she wanted him in the top group. The only reason I didn't want to move him up was because the two groups were almost at the same place, and I felt with a smaller number in this group I could give him more attention. The mother said his friends were in the top group and he felt like he's not reading up to his ability. I talked with the principal and we decided to just move him up. He did fine in this group.

I spent a lot of time teaching skills. We had to teach the skills to keep the management system going, and that took a lot of time. I made manipulative games that they could do along with the skills. I found that trying to teach the skills took more time than anything else. This reading program didn't let me see reading as a whole. So finally about midway through the year I said, forget the skills. The skills were breaking up the content of the stories. I just let them go ahead and read the stories and then go back and catch them up on the skills. The students in the slow group didn't get all their skills. I mean they didn't pass them, and I figure they're never going to pass them. The whole series is set up so that year after year they go back over them, so I figured they will get them later. I could sit there for three months trying to teach them one skill and I knew they weren't going to get it. I felt like I was never going to get to teach all of them because they were so slow.

If I could do the year over I would give the slow group a series



of tests. I would use the Durrell and from the results I would teach the skills through the context of reading. They had supplementary books listed after each story, but because they were so slow with their seat-work or spelling, they very seldom got into these activities. I would try to get them into supplementary books. I would also give them a language follow-up each day, so they could do something oral with the story. I would try to get them more relaxed and into reading and interest centers. I just felt there were many skills to be taught and this was haunting me! I couldn't let the day go by without at least mentioning something about skills.

I like working with all the students. I don't have any preference. I will admit that I spent more time with the low group. The high group is nice because I can use them to help with the slower students and I did quite a bit of that and this relieved some of the pressure. I worry more about the slow group. I knew some would be fast and some slow, but that's life, and all are learning.

The slow group improved after March on their skills. I never planned on finishing their book and they shocked me, and did better than I expected. I measured their achievement by the completion of a book. It was a pretty good measure of achievement, and as far as I was concerned, they had accomplished. I wanted them to finish the book just so I could know I had taught them all the skills. I didn't pass anyone if I didn't teach a skill. I had decided in March that I wasn't going to teach all the skills to the low group. I decided there was no reason to rush because you can't go any faster than they can go, and I had it in my head they weren't going to finish, and then they did. It kind of shocked me!

### Analysis of Teacher One

Individually and as a group, this teacher perceives students with reading difficulties also exhibiting behavior problems. Hyperactivity and immaturity confound the task of teaching reading. Parents' co-operation is also a very important aspect in helping this teacher accomplish significant reading growth with problem readers. Reading comprehension is lacking and slow reading rate are typical behaviors of students experiencing reading difficulties.

The special reading teacher was used as the main source for helping the problem readers. Within the classroom setting, this teacher increased the amount of time spent in teaching reading and individual attention was provided for each student. The same reading materials were used with the entire class and special reading games were constructed for motivating the students experiencing frustration with learning the skills.

Personal frustration was also expressed as this teacher tried to accomplish her goals of helping each student achieve growth in reading. Pre- and in-service teacher training did not provide the necessary background this teacher needed for working with the type of student described. A clear conception of diagnostic teaching did not develop during the teacher training period and this lack of knowledge was a major factor for frustration. According to this teacher the best source of help for working with problem readers was a resource file of materials which could be used with students experiencing difficulties in reading. Energy and enthusiasm for continued learning about new ways to work with problem readers keep this teacher excited about the teaching profession.

Teacher Two Interview Data

## First Interview

The reading behavior of this student was diagnosed as border-line perceptual. He has reversals, poor recall, and trouble keeping his place on the page. I'd say he is a word-by-word reader.

I did not actually do the diagnosing on this student. He is having trouble in reading and mathematics, particularly great difficulty keeping his place in reading. I had to keep him right next to me most of the time. I always had to repeat things, so I finally had him tested.

He was in a group with four other students. I would work with this group for about thirty minutes a day.

I would begin each lesson with the introduction of new words. Each student had his own group of word cards and we went through them daily. I made picture clues on the back so they could work on their own. Then we would work on the basal lesson for the day, which also included some phonics work. I used a separate phonics program for the whole class.

I helped this student with his phonics and practiced with flash cards. He also went to the special teacher. Because he was a border-line perceptual he did not qualify for the learning disabilities room. We have a special teacher in the district who works with the student who needs special help. Her room is right across from mine, so when this child felt like it, he would go into her room. He just went back and forth on his own and even when I was working with him, he'd say, "Can I leave and go to her room?" I liked him very much; he is a very nice boy.

At this point I used the scattered approach with this student. The reading teacher and the special teacher helped me the most with this student. He saw each teacher three or four times a week. Sometimes in the morning and sometimes in the afternoon. He didn't have a specific time to go each week, but would go when the teachers could fit him into their schedule.

If I had lots of money, I would order a few more materials. I would also hire more remedial reading teachers and define their role. The remedial reading teacher in our school is supposed to work with all teachers. She is very strong on language experience type activities, which I think the classroom teacher is qualified to teach. I would like to see the remedial reading teacher find out the specific weakness of the child. Also she could help the classroom teacher gather materials to help the student. I would like to have the school system set up a central center where there would be different kinds of materials available, even if there were just ditto materials on specific skills. If a child is weak in a certain skill, you could quickly go to the center and pull something out, something at least to get you started, because you don't have time to make up all the activities yourself.

I think I am a seat-of-the-pants type teacher. I do a lot of intuitive type teaching. All the teachers are interested in reading right now because we just changed our basal text and it allows for more freedom, which makes it more interesting to teach. You have to read the guides and they contain a lot more new suggestions on things to do with problem readers.

I think the first principle you have to take into consideration

is the student himself and the things that you have learned along the way about the student and then look at the types of mistakes he's making. I'm mainly concerned with the child and the learning problem.

I am trying to work more on an individualized program with students, helping them to learn how to read. I think it is important to give students individual attention and make reading a pleasure. If a child has difficulty in reading, he is not going to enjoy reading, so I feel that I need to establish some sort of pleasurable reading for each child. I don't know if I am doing it with this class.

My formal education was quite a while ago. I would say nothing really sticks out in my mind as being more or less valuable. I think student teaching was interesting. My student teaching contacts told me what not to do instead of what to do. The most valuable part of my education was substitute teaching. I think substitute teaching should be required for every teacher because you can tell so much about all the different levels, what goes on in the room, different techniques, etc. It gave me an idea of what to do, gave me confidence to go ahead on my own and to say "I can do it." I learned a lot in two years; it was like an internship. I think it's much better than student teaching.

I would like to look around at the techniques available for setting up learning centers. I would like to go around and see what other teachers are doing, find out how they teach skills, how they evaluate the students. I'm sure there must be some teachers who are doing many exciting things with learning centers.

## Teacher Two: Second Interview

This student is a perceptual problem and this one has a very bad speech problem. This student has many physical problems. Another student was asthmatic and missed a lot of school. This girl transferred from another school. I think she just really didn't have the experience background that a lot of students have in this school.

If I could do the year over, I might give them a different type of skill program. I don't know. I think I did everything I could possibly do for them. There is a student evaluation in the basal program, but I don't put much faith in it. I think my own evaluation on a day-to-day basis gave me more insight.

I like working with all groups. I prefer working with these boys; they worked independently with the reading stations. The slow group is really hard. I had to devote a lot of time to teach individual students. I gave them work one day, and they would understand it, and the next day they didn't know it. I liked them all except for this one student. There are one or two that sometimes bug you a bit. This girl is very adult for her age and has been exposed to lots of things already in her young life. I felt she contaminated the other students. Her brothers and sisters were a big influence on her thinking.

These six children were my top first graders and they needed very few directed lessons. They were almost exclusively using reading stations and enjoyed the individual freedom. I checked them about once a week with oral reading.

These children required a bit closer checking and they almost always did the skill work and workbook activities. They read silently

at their reading stations and I checked them maybe twice a week, asking comprehension questions.

These four boys are my lowest first graders. I don't have any non-readers. I would put them at listening posts. This forces them to be good listeners. I try to direct their work a little bit more.

One girl came in December and didn't have any readiness skills. She couldn't even print, so we put her on an individual program with the reading support teacher. We also set up a mother helper to work with her.

These two boys were both independent. When I first got them I thought they were slow, but they came up through the ranks and both turned out to be very bright. They have all the qualities of being exceptional students. They have very little social skills.

All of the groups used the basal program. I used games with those having difficulty. I also used flash cards and blending wheels. These two students didn't speak the English language, so doing phonics with them was a waste of time. This student was a perceptual problem and worked with the special teacher. He couldn't read a story by himself, so I would just tell him the word. I used the basal material along with other teacher-made games. His reading skills were taught by using game-type activities and some language experience. The special teacher never really said what she was doing to help him. She also had an aide working with her, so even if she wasn't there, the aide would work with him.

### Analysis of Teacher Two

For this teacher, reading difficulties were also learning disabilities. Perceptual problems, reversals, memory, and low reading rate were behaviors that this teacher used to describe students experiencing difficulties in reading. Speech problems, physical problems, and lack of experience background also contribute to reading difficulties.

The diagnostic techniques were used only by the remedial or learning disabilities teachers. This teacher felt that it was not her role to probe into specific weaknesses that she saw being exhibited by some of the students in the classroom. Intuitive feelings were the main source for decision on what and how to teach problem readers. Individualized work, use of additional phonics materials, and language experience activities were used by this teacher to work out the specific skill weaknesses of students experiencing difficulties in reading.

Lacking knowledge of the diagnostic prescriptive teaching process contributed to this teacher's feelings of frustration in teaching problem readings. Helping these students enjoy school and reading describes the depth of a conception of diagnostic teaching. Lacking self-confidence stems from specific training in the skills of dealing with the student experiencing difficulties in reading. This teacher expresses a strong desire to gain knowledge in individualized instruction using learning centers. Confidence in teaching was gained during two years of substitute teaching, which was described as being a better training ground than the student teaching experience.



Teacher Three Interview Data

## First Interview

This student is in my room for reading. His reading behavior is different than anything that I had ever experienced. He was repeating first grade and showed an interest in reading, but didn't seem to know how to go about working alone during seat-work time. I think there were specific things that were getting in his way and causing this type of behavior.

I don't know the specific reading problems. I didn't have the opportunity, experience, or understanding to really diagnose this student's problems. There were three of us working together with this child and we divided up the time we spent working with him in reading. I was upset because he was repeating the grade and he still ended up in the very bottom group at the end of the year.

I used a format of recognizing letters and sounds and being able to say a word for certain beginning letters. I used the testing records that were sent from the kindergarten teacher. From those test results, it helped us decide if we could place this student in a group situation. I don't think this was really diagnosing the problem.

I worked with him less than half an hour individually, and this was not even on a daily basis. I found it difficult to provide more time, but he received more attention than some of the others.

This student would sit every day doing very little during the time he was supposed to do his written individual seat work. When I worked with him in a small group, his eyes would be all over and he

wouldn't be able to follow along with the rest of the group. He would just kind of daydream or bother other children.

I didn't use any specific materials to remediate his reading problems. I just passed him on to another group situation. He would just go back and repeat one of the basals, the pre-primers specifically. He was working with a group that showed a similar type of behavior, inattentiveness, short attention span, etc.

I liked working with this student, but I got very frustrated because I didn't know what to do or where to go to find materials to use with him. I felt at a loss because I knew I didn't have any specific time to work with this student alone. I felt he needed more individual type attention and someone to talk to on a daily basis. I felt like there were things constantly from home that were going on and this was causing some of the difficulty in attention. As far as working with him, I liked him as a person; he's really a good little student. When I worked with him he really tried and he even gave me the impression that he was going to learn all those words at home, and the next day he would come back and it was just the same thing over again.

If I could start the year over, I would probably try to pinpoint this child's specific problems. I don't know if it was a perceptual problem or not. He did do several reversals in his writing. He always worked very, very slowly and I don't know if that was daydreaming or whether he couldn't get the assignment. I would work with him on an individual basis out of the basal materials and try to motivate him to feel successful.

I joined a group called the reading committee and our specific

purpose was to test the children so we could place them in homogeneous groups this next year. I felt that one of these people on that team actually gave me support and helped me be more aware of what really was happening when the students came to first grade. I don't feel that I accomplished my reading objectives and I felt lost at the end of the year. I don't think I really had my objectives set up to know exactly where I was going with this class.

I would really like to have some specific materials that would help me meet the needs of this class. I'm afraid to ask people and no one really volunteers to be very helpful. We don't have many supplementary materials that accompany the basal text.

My previous work with the sixth grade helped me to realize the span of reading ability in each class. It was during this time that it hit me, and I would like to know how to teach reading to all ability levels.

In the beginning I tried watching this student participate in a group situation. I observed for probably longer than I should have before making any decisions on what to do. I thought it was important to see him in his day-to-day activities and observe his behavior in various situations. I tried to gather information from his previous records, talked to other teachers, etc. I tried to put all these things in a perspective in order to see if I could find out just what was the problem. The home situation was a stumbling block. I didn't get any information from the home, and the mother doesn't come in for conferences. I had written several notes and she never answered them. That was an indication that I had come to a dead end. With the help of the other

two teachers, we decided that it was best to go ahead and put him in another group and try to work on his behavior. We tried looking at him as an individual to find out how he felt about school, reading, and things like that.

I don't think at this point I have a well-defined role. I have tried I think in most things to be a guide and helper, to give direction and support. I tried to help kids be successful.

Student teaching was the most valuable part of my college education. Through grade school and high school my parents were a valuable part of my life. They instilled in me a feeling that I was worth something, that I could do something with my life, and they supported me during my pre-service years. I feel this was very valuable. My methods courses were the least valuable part of my education. I just didn't feel prepared. I didn't learn some of the things about teaching that I thought I should know.

I would want to continue my education in an area that would help me learn more about children, and how I can help them learn. I also want to continue teaching at the same time I'm learning or taking classes.

## Teacher Three: Second Interview

Reading was taught in ability groups. I recommended at the end of the year that the students in the low group have supplementary materials as they were not ready to work in the basal texts. They were still working on letter names, sound identification, and writing the alphabet. Some were beginning to work with sight vocabulary.

The basal text was used for grouping the children. I was new to the system, so I felt a little uneasy about which direction to take with this class. We started out as a group and I let the children divide themselves into specific groups. I wanted to get a feel for who was going to work together. I wanted to find out what kinds of things they were doing in reading, what were some of their study skills, and how well they were able to sit and do written work. I began with game-type activities and moved more slowly through the basal texts. I found it was better for this low group to do more visual type of things. They needed me to read directions, which took up a great deal of my time. I tried to get them to work together and help each other. I spent a lot of time reading orally and also let them read orally. I didn't diagnose each student for specific problems.

Working with the students who were having difficulties bothered me a lot, and I felt frustrated because I didn't know where to go or how to find out the specific problems. I did try to provide motivation for them and get them to enjoy books. I think I need direction in getting to know the student as a person and try to understand what's happening in his daily life.

I would do things differently next year, but I'm not sure exactly what approach to pursue. I feel I've failed these students. Maybe my expectations were too high. This student had a lot of problems in the home, and if I could do the year over I would try to get the social worker to work with the parents and find out what was happening in the home situation. One mother and I had a real argument for about two months, just because I mentioned to her that I was concerned.

This student seemed to have a great need to talk to someone. He didn't seem to be able to talk to me and was not able to communicate with any teacher. I don't think he was physically in good health.

This student also had some home problems. She was very immature for her age. I wish I could have seen some of these things at the beginning of the year. I think it would have made a difference in how I worked with the students.

I used an Informal Reading Inventory at the end of the year to measure growth. This was my main diagnostic approach, along with observation.

### Analysis of Teacher Three

Describing a student's reading problems for this teacher involved a variety of behaviors. Lack of motivation, short attention span, day-dreaming, and a variety of behavior problems confounded the instructional process for this teacher. Parents' lack of interest and unwillingness to share background information with the teacher was a year-long battle.

This teacher felt that the responsibility for helping the student with reading problems resided in her hands. Other teachers' suggestions and previous records were used to develop grouping and teaching strategies. The basal reader was the typical format used with individuals and groups. Most of the problem readers continued working at the pre-primer level until mastery was established. The repetition was frustrating for both the students and teacher.

Frustration in teaching problem readers was described by this teacher as a general lack of knowledge about diagnostic/prescriptive techniques. Time was not available for individual attention, and lack of co-operation from parents was the main cause of frustration and failure. This teacher was also unsure of daily objectives and yearly goals which limited the perspective to that of guide and helper. Teacher education in reading did not contribute to establishing a clearcut perspective in teaching students experiencing difficulties in reading. Student teaching was a valuable learning experience for this teacher, a way to see theory and practice come together.

Teacher Four Interview Data

## First Interview

This student had difficulty reading silently. He only understands when you read to him. There are lots of words that he doesn't know how to pronounce, but he can comprehend when someone reads to him.

I was able to work with him and another student with similar problems for about twenty minutes per day for the entire year. We worked on word analysis skills, going back to the very beginning. Around January he was pronouncing some words and understanding what I would read out loud. He still wasn't able to understand the material when he read alone. I didn't give any formal test or anything, except have him read the Dolch Word List at the beginning of the year.

I worked with him for twenty minutes per day because he was so far behind the rest of the class. He always received my attention first, even if it meant neglecting the other students.

This student would always be very responsive and co-operative when I worked with him. He would read the story out loud and I would read the written questions. He always did the work when we worked together, but had great difficulty when I left him alone.

I only used the basal materials with him. This was the main reading book we had in school, along with worksheets on comprehension. I would like to know what skills he has mastered, vowels, blends, diagraphs, and also what materials he has been reading. I would like to know what basal materials he used before and what tests were given him and how he scored on these tests.



This boy was very co-operative and very easy to work with most of the time.

I think part of my problem last year was that I started with materials that were too advanced and he was over his head for a while until I realized that he wasn't at this level. If I had had more background information this would have helped.

I am teaching in a private school that is just getting started. Most of my help has been through the course work I have taken at the university level. The people at my school couldn't help me with the problem readers.

I would like to see a school-wide file of skill sheets and skill work. Ever since I started teaching, I was always trying to gather materials and work sheets of various skills. A general file of skill sheets would be helpful when you need a practice sheet for a student who is having difficulties. I don't always find workbooks the answer. They don't always go in the order that you teach the skills. More materials for practice would be helpful. Even in my class of fifteen I could have used someone who was qualified to teach reading to help with those students who were having problems. I think more manpower and materials would be extremely helpful.

The best source for the development of my conception of diagnostic teaching was just being a teacher and working with children. You must figure out where they are in reading. The more I learn about reading, the more I realize that teaching is not a snap thing, and if you really want to do the right kind of job, you need specific training. I don't think I ever realized how technical the teaching of reading can

be and how much you need to know to teach the students that are having difficulties.

My role in teaching students who are experiencing difficulties is similar to that of a coach. I want this type of child to feel relaxed with me and also want him to be honest. It seems that some students with reading problems try to pull the wool over your eyes. They want you to think that they know more than they do and that's part of the problem. You really want them to be honest. You don't want to make a threatening situation so you really are more of a coach, someone that's helping them along rather than the omniscient teacher.

The most important part of my education was when I actually student taught, when I got right in there. The least valuable were the courses that I had to take before I really had a chance to observe students--those courses that made you write lesson plans for a hypothetical situation. Even after I started visiting classes, I had a different idea about what teaching was all about, but after I had student teaching and then took the courses, it was more meaningful.

After I finish my M.A., I want to study some things of my own interest that are not related to education. I would like to take courses in music and also learn how to be a writer.

## Teacher Four: Second Interview

This group of students each have their own individual problems and they take a lot of my time. I do a lot of skill work and tried to get into the stories with them. It was difficult work because of the basal material we were using being just too difficult for them. I used the stories which they wanted to reread. We had to read them together and that was a long process. The words were very difficult and I finally ended up using other skill sheets from basal materials. We have quite a collection of skill sheets that we use and other books that I could supplement. Once in a while we would go back to the basal texts in order to keep the students satisfied. I felt that I had to finish that book. We didn't finish.

This student came in the middle of the year and I really didn't know where to place him. I did some sort of diagnosis with him, but even after doing that I was still puzzled. There were a lot of things that were ambiguous about him and it's hard when he came in the middle of the year to know what to do.

These students were good steady workers that I could see progress. I did skill work several times a week and we also read stories in the basal. But again this book was difficult. I think it is a grade level more difficult than other basals. I did switch to other materials if I could get my hands on them, skill sheets that seemed to offer and relate to their needs and level. They were an exciting group to work with because you really saw progress throughout the year.

These students had a definite problem with identifying words and also with comprehension. I didn't use the basal materials with

them. I'd say I definitely saw progress with this student. This student seemed to enjoy being with this group, even though it was challenging for him. I felt he had a much more mature attitude working with a little bit more mature group. This student I ended up working with alone. He was an interesting child. It ended up that I finally had to work with his parents in getting them to help him with his reading at home. They had to be trained themselves to see that they could read a story to him and make him sit down and write letters to people. They needed to see that they had to do more language oriented things at home to get him to want to read and see a reason for reading. This is one thing I did, because in my education courses, working with parents was stressed. I wish I would have started working with them sooner; it was an excellent experience. Parents need to be trained, but I definitely saw progress with a student once they started supporting him at home.

I placed these students into groups on the basis of what the teacher before had decided and my own observation and intuition. Also I had worked with some students last year, so I knew them and I knew where they were. This has a definite advantage.

I didn't do any specific diagnostic testing with these students. My plan of attack was on a day-to-day basis. I taught some skills to these problem students just because I felt they really needed more word attack and phonics training. I kept a running checklist of skills they knew. I guess that would be the most systematic way of doing it, just to see what I've gone over and keep up with them.

I used a supplementary phonics program with some of the students. I found that very helpful in working on particular phonics skills. It

would also sometimes amount to just gathering old things that I found in the store room that would be helpful.

If I could do the year over, I think my plan of attack would be different. I'm sure that I would give them some of the tests that we used this summer, especially the graded oral paragraphs and the Ekwall Phonics Survey. I know that this student did master many of the skills even though it seems that it took longer. I still would give him that material, but would attack it differently. I would use any materials that I could get my hands on.

I feel that my role in teaching this type of student is to first of all try to figure out exactly where they are having the problems. Where are they blocking? I would then go from there and see what I could do to help. There is no reading specialist in my school. I do have an aide, but she is dependent on my teaching most of the students. I'm the one who is responsible for helping the child who has more serious problems with reading. I would teach the student that is having difficulties first, because he really needs it. Because of their problems with reading they would not get involved and join the other children. I would always put the problem children first.

In the other school that I taught in for two years, we had a reading specialist who would come in three times a week and work with my five lowest students for half an hour or forty-five minutes. I put them in her hands and it was great. I didn't really feel burdened or that responsible for them other than the two days they were with me, and then I would have definite work for them to do. I used a basal, but the reading specialist used different materials. It was her responsibility

to provide the materials. I think I saw more progress with students when I worked with them each day. You get to know them much better; it is a much closer knit group. So I would say it was more effective, even though perhaps I didn't have the training that the reading specialist does. It was more effective because I worked with them every day and I knew them. I had a better rapport with them and also tried to keep in contact with the parents. I feel it was much more effective when I worked with the students rather than the reading specialist.

### Analysis of Teacher Four

Not being able to comprehend the reading materials describes the reading behavior this teacher experienced with individuals and groups.

Special work with phonics skills, and increasing time given to individuals experiencing difficulties in reading were techniques this teacher used to help meet individual problems. The basal reader and special work sheets were used for practice. Additional helpers in the classroom, reduction of class size, and a special reading teacher would help reduce the number of problem readers. An essential part of effective teaching for this teacher is a school file of skill pages which could be used for practice on areas of weakness.

The complexity of the reading process overwhelmed this teacher. In order to help this teacher endure the frustrations, her role in teaching problem readers resembled that of a coach getting the team to feel relaxed before a big game. This teacher feels that being honest with students who are experiencing difficulties in reading can be one of the most important contributions a teacher makes in their lives. It is important for this teacher to provide the opportunity for students to share frustrations in a relaxed atmosphere. Teacher education in reading did not provide this teacher with any specific course work in dealing with students experiencing difficulties. Graduate and in-service experiences take on greater importance as you gain insights into the problems and frustrations of the classroom.

This teacher sees the role of the reading specialist as working

directly with the teachers. The students experiencing difficulties in reading should be kept in the classroom where the teacher can observe the reading behavior in all curricular areas.



Teacher Five Interview Data

## First Interview

This student is very reluctant to read at all, silently or orally. If there is any reading to be done, she would prefer to go in a small group with a few classmates and read to them. I would let her go with a girl friend, but I don't think she was doing any of the reading. I think the other girl was doing all the oral reading. Her specific reading problems, as I have observed, were that reading is very difficult for her. She doesn't know how to sound out words. I don't think she ever had any phonics instruction; if she did, it has all been forgotten. When she would come to a word she didn't know she would stop and say "I don't know this word." I couldn't figure out her problem.

I used the cloze procedure at the beginning of the year. I was teaching science at the junior high level and I tried to help the students read the text book and use the reading guides, etc. These students are reading too high to be placed in a corrective classroom. I taught very little reading to this student. I would say almost none.

Since I do not teach reading, this student would respond to the things I would do to help her with reading. She would not read orally for me and I told her we all have problems. After she began to trust my ideas, she changed a little. I think she was afraid of me at the beginning of the year. I feel she was threatened and she felt this was going to be another failure year for her. Reading orally to these students is the only means of assuring myself that these students are getting the material that they need. I also lecture, but this is not always the best way to learn.

I wrote most of the material they were to remember on the overhead. Any work that I expected them to take home to study I would outline for them. I required them to keep a notebook for study and I went over everything with them orally. Science seems to be a subject the students like and I tried making it fun for them to learn, but this really didn't help them much with their reading problems.

I would like to collect all the background information that I could about this student. I think I would start at the very beginning. Her mother told me she doesn't like to read and her only interest is gymnastics class. I tried to find her reading materials in this area and I had other teachers help me find material about famous gymnastics experts. I would begin at a very primer level of testing to find out the reading level and then find materials at her reading and interest level. She really hates reading, so I'd read to her as often as possible.

She started out at the beginning of the year a very uptight child. She had a very close friend and when the two of them were dissatisfied with another class, it carried over into my class. They were very bitter about school. It is very frustrating working with this type of student.

If I could start the year over, I would probably do the same thing again. I would also go to some outside sources for help, especially the reading teacher. Also, I would try and get the English and Social Studies teachers to help teach reading to this student.

I really didn't have any help this past year. We are not supposed to be teaching reading and I was doing it sort of under the table illegally. We have special reading classes for the purpose of helping problem readers. The junior high students are not supposed to have

special reading instruction in our building. The English teachers are supposed to recommend the students that are having difficulty and need special help. Those below third grade reading ability were put in special classes and the rest were kept in the regular classrooms. The media center is not geared for helping students with reading. Anything that I have done has been mostly on my own. The one teacher who considers herself a reading expert is dealing with 1940 methods and is getting ready to retire. I don't feel proper materials and procedures are being used with the students. Hopefully this will change.

I think getting a full-time reading person would be very helpful. One with a reading certificate and reading qualifications who could work with other teachers.

My own children are excellent readers and working with students with reading problems is very upsetting. It's really a loss and handicap in their lives. Not only does it hinder their schoolwork, but it causes a lot of problems later on in life. They try and hide it so no one will know that they can't read. I have an idea that sometimes I can do more good by teaching reading in science class. Sometimes they get the feeling they don't have to read today, the teacher is reading for me. I don't hold their inability to read against them.

The technique that I have for helping students with reading problems doesn't come out of books; it is just a mental attitude. Students have to want to do it and you must find what they are interested in and help them see that it is not a chore. They don't carry reading over into other areas. Reading comes first in helping them understand the subject matter. I don't think reading should be cut out of the curriculum.

We don't cut out football or basketball.

I'm not really a reading teacher, so sometimes they accept what I do much more than they would if I were teaching them directly. What I do indirectly in my subject area I think they accept a little more. I think they'll respond to me sometimes with some of the things I do rather than what their English or Reading teacher tries to accomplish.

I think university professors should be teaching examples. The one I had was very informal and relaxed and this is the way we should be with students. He also used a variety of teaching methods in our classes. We listened to tapes and diagnosed, even in my beginning reading class. My mathematics methods were very inadequate.

I would like to learn more about relating to students, not just teaching subject matter. Junior high students have definite developmental stages and I think an understanding of this level would be helpful to me in teaching.

Sometimes teachers got so involved in their own problems that they forget about relating to students. Students are not machines that you stuff information into; you must treat them as human beings.

## Teacher Five: Second Interview

These students are the poor readers and they need as much help as they can get, and often I would pair them up with a better reader to make sure that they understood what they were doing.

At the beginning of the year I used the cloze procedure on the basic book that we used. Also, I had them do some writing on their own. Most of them had bad spelling, grammar, and sentence construction, and you couldn't read what they had written. The school is ability-grouped according to mathematics scores and recommendations from the elementary teachers.

I would use the same materials with all of the students. I would read everything to this group and ask them if they could do the assignment. I always gave them the information verbally rather than written. I taught the class as one group, but would prefer to work on an individual basis with this class. These students are discipline problems. They just won't do anything. This boy just quit working at school because he was moving. He decided that he wasn't going to do anything until he got to his new school. He ended up not moving; his mother didn't get remarried, so he was left far behind. This boy worked when he felt like it, and this one had a great deal of emotional problems. I was trying to get him into the emotionally disturbed class and special help program and was never successful.

I think the lower group achieved on the whole more than other students because of the individual help that was given. The worst attitudes in the room are in this low group, but they came around at the

end of the year. One student was very shy, but during the last quarter she would stay after school and talk with me. This helped her gain more confidence for asking questions during class time. I don't know how much I accomplished with these students as far as skills are concerned, but I think they changed in their attitude about themselves.

I think I would do the same thing again next year if I had these same students.

### Analysis of Teacher Five

Observed behaviors of problem readers were lack of motivation, reluctance to read orally, few word identification skills, and low self-esteem.

This teacher survived by reading most of the material to the students. Making study guides that were geared to individual assignments in the content areas was one way to help the student feel success. Additional help and extra resource materials for teachers strengthen a school's reading program. One resource this teacher used was herself. In establishing a rapport with problem readers, this teacher provided the atmosphere for free discussion of reading problems.

This teacher did not have any specific plans or objectives for diagnosing the problem readers. The techniques that were used did not come out of books, but are intuitive feelings and a mental attitude this teacher feels about students experiencing problems in school and especially in reading.

Reading was taught within the content material available in the classroom. The school does not provide special teachers to work with students experiencing problems. The university experience at pre- and in-service level should provide teaching models that teachers can use in their own classroom experience. Getting to know students as human beings should be the most important objective for all teachers. All aspects of diagnostic teaching should involve the affective dimension.

Teacher Six Interview Data

## First Interview

This student is very tiny and has trouble reading orally. He seems to do fairly well on his phonetic skills, but has difficulty applying these skills to the reading situation. Reading is not an automatic process with him; he overuses the phonetic skills in reading. He also doesn't know all the basic sight words that a second grader should know. He has tubes in both ears and I think he uses this as an excuse for not hearing. I have never convinced his parents that he uses his hearing problem in school as an excuse for not doing his work. He also had difficulty in first grade; maybe this has something to do with his getting off to a bad start. When a child gets off to a bad start, he develops a bad self-image as far as reading goes. It kind of goes downhill from then on, if the problem is not corrected.

I used a beginning reading survey test with this student. I also relied a great deal on the reading teacher's tests and individual tests. She used several types of phonics tests, comprehension tests, and informal reading inventories.

I worked with this student on the average of twenty minutes to thirty minutes daily. He also qualified for reading help at the beginning of the year, so he received an additional half-hour daily.

He is easily distracted and very immature. The individual help with the reading teacher on a one-to-one basis was better than I could give him in a classroom full of many distractions.

I worked with him on language skills, prefixes, suffixes, vowels, and different phonetic rules. We did quite a bit of work with reading



stories and plays, trying to read with expression and expanding sight vocabulary. I would alternate between something that he had created in his own words, along with the basal reading material.

The only treatment procedure that I used involved getting a few mother helpers to work with this student on writing, drilling him in phonics rules, and playing games with him. I did language experience activities with him. You don't learn language unless you use it, that's my feeling.

I am very concerned with comprehension. I would like to find out about the end of the year testing. Even if a student can't read well orally and his silent reading has improved, he must be becoming a better reader. So I am primarily interested in comprehension.

I enjoy working with this student; he has a very charming personality. He is very immature in some ways, especially in oral communication. He is very effervescent and loves to talk. As far as working with him in reading, he was a very frustrating boy to work with at times. It was extremely difficult to hold his attention. I enjoyed him as a child in the classroom, but working with him specifically in a reading situation was very frustrating because I didn't feel that I was accomplishing as much as I could on a one-to-one basis with him.

I would probably follow the same program if I had a chance to do the year over again. I would like more time to give him individual attention and have a few extra helping mothers work with him in his weak areas. Maybe I could get some competent older children to work with him on reading stories, plays, etc. I think the more they read, especially if it's things they enjoy, it helps them grow in reading ability.

My major source of help this past year was the reading consultant. She is the only person, other than teachers, that you share your ideas with and also gain ideas and knowledge about reading. We also have a diagnostician who does a battery of tests on a student and then sets up her own classes. I rely on other teachers on my faculty because all of us together have quite a few years of teaching experience and there are a few of them in particular that I really respect.

I think that one thing that bothers me the most is not having enough time to plan the way I would like to plan. Another thing, which is a problem in all districts, is meaningful in-service training. I don't mean just sitting, drinking coffee, and listening to an expert come and talk. I mean something practical and constructive that you can take back to your classroom and use immediately with a child. Something like a game, a new technique, a new way of looking at a particular situation. I feel very frustrated in these two areas. I don't have the time to do things or have enough ideas or information about specific areas for remediation. It would also be helpful to just know where to go to get help.

I taught fourth, fifth, and sixth grades before going to the primary grades, and just seeing the number of students who couldn't read was an incentive for me to find out more about reading. Also a big influence for me was working in a practicum situation. This was the first time in all my years of teaching that I had a chance to zero in on all the different procedures, techniques, and concepts involved in teaching reading. It kind of sparked my interest. I think all teachers should have this type of experience.

There are curriculum guidelines that I was expected to follow, but very frankly I have a habit of ignoring what I'm supposed to be doing. I do what I think is most appropriate in the particular situation. As I think a lot of teachers do. What you do in your own classroom is your own business as you're achieving your goal, which is, I assume, teaching children to read. I rely on what I think is most appropriate for that particular student or group of students, and I find I can combine a lot of different types of techniques and procedures. I don't think there are any pure answers to a lot of teaching.

I feel my role is to get the student to enjoy or want to read. Then the next thing is the actual learning of the skills that will help him become a competent reader. I don't think you get very far if you teach all the technicalities involved and they don't enjoy reading. I don't think you can do anything unless you enjoy doing it or unless you look forward to doing it to a certain extent.

I'm sorry to say, but I think the least valuable were a lot of the courses that I had in the university. Both undergraduate and graduate courses were not very practical, and I think out of all those hours, I came out on the short side. The most valuable experience was student teaching. If you get a good critic teacher, it's great. I think my own experience in the classroom is what my education is really based on.

I would like to pursue my work in reading. I would like to keep teaching and then apply my course work to the students I'm working with. An ideal learning situation is talking about ideas, applying them, and then working it out yourself.

## Teacher Six: Second Interview

These students were all very immature. This boy just doesn't want to be in school. He threw a temper tantrum from the first day in kindergarten and it's been a struggle ever since. This student is the youngest of eight children and she's been treated like a baby all of her life. So maturity was a big part of all the students experiencing difficulties in reading. I worked twenty minutes a day with them and would stick to concrete type activities. I tried to work in some of the activities that were a part of the second grade curriculum.

At the end of the year we fill out observation forms for each child and then the principal sits down with these lists and groups the students into levels for the next year.

At the beginning of the year I don't look at the test records at all. I like to spend a week or two just using my own intuition because I don't like to go on someone else's observations. I did use last spring's Gates Reading Test scores as a guide, but I go as much by intuition as anything.

This girl was being retained this year. She went through normal testing with the diagnostician and I would go so far as to say she is dull normal in intelligence. With this student it was like pulling teeth just to get him to think that school maybe was fun. He finally got to the point where he was reading more. With this student, there was a lot of lip service, but absolutely no support or help from home. If she would have had a little more attention from home she might have done better, even in first grade. This student's parents are over-anxious and that creates a problem for him. They are more upset with

him and his reading than he is. The parents really baby him, which is why he acts the way he does in school.

The reading teacher did all of the formal testing. I use more of my own individual observation, phonic skills, sight words, and some of the things they should have learned in first grade.

I let my feelings for children overtake my academic common sense. Maybe I should try and do some of the testing on my own. I like the oral and silent part of the Durrell. Most tests are really a pain in the neck, but as far as specific techniques are concerned, I would probably have stuck basically to the same things I used last year, because I really tried to do a little bit of everything. I don't stick totally to the skills management program. What you do in your room is your business. In the upper grades the teachers expect that the students know all of the skills, and they will put them at a certain level whether they are reading at that level or not.

Analysis of Teacher Six

Immaturity, poor self-concept, difficulty with word recognition skills are behaviors that this teacher used to describe students experiencing difficulties in reading.

Special reading teachers outside the classroom provided this teacher with test scores and in some cases worked one-to-one with some students. This teacher used aides in the classroom to provide extra time in drill work and vocabulary development. When the teacher could provide extra time it was spent on comprehension activities, along with extra work in the basal readers and trying to get students to develop the love of reading through literature and games.

This teacher was extremely frustrated with teaching problem readers. She did not see large growth spurts and progress was slow. Curriculum guides were not helpful, so much of this teacher's planning was not long range but developed during the teaching session. Teacher education in reading provided this teacher with very little help in the development of any conception of diagnostic teaching. The insights into a specific role for this teacher have developed from internal feelings for students with reading problems. Having enough time for planning and lack of meaningful in-service programs were two areas that frustrated this teacher in her desire to help students experiencing difficulties in reading. An eclectic approach was used, based on the feelings this teacher felt were the right approach for the day. Having students enjoy what they are doing, especially reading, was the main objective expressed by this teacher.

Teacher Seven Interview Data

## First Interview

This student does not enjoy reading. She can look at one page maybe an hour before going on to another page. She is very easily distracted, has a limited sight vocabulary, and is very weak in phonetic skills.

I use the basal reading series test to diagnose reading performance. I do not use any individual testing procedures.

This student gets minimal individual help from me. She is involved in a reading group for one hour a day. She is a student that needs a great deal of individual help and attention but she gets very little of it because of the size of the group.

I will give this student an assignment and she will write it down on her desk and then look out the window, sometimes even close her eyes. She is obviously not with us at all, mentally. Part of the problem is due to her late evening hours. She stays up very late at night and comes to school very tired. When I call on her she will make an effort to do what I ask, but her reaction is, "I'll do it because you've asked me to, but I really don't want to. I'm probably not going to be able to do it anyway, but I will try." There is no antagonism, but there is very definitely a feeling of what's the use.

I can't say that I used any specific treatment procedures other than what the actual syllabus or teacher's guide recommended. I did try to encourage her to read more independently outside of class, library books for enjoyment, which is sort of a ridiculous thing to ask of a child who doesn't like to read.

I would really like to do an informal reading inventory in order to find out her reading level. The reading series does place children on different levels and gives some idea where they are as far as the series is concerned. Hopefully, at the end of the year, after having gone through the material, there would be some growth, but I'm not really at all sure that it will take place with this particular series. The tests are geared for comprehension, but the emphasis during the year is on word attack skills. So the tests and materials don't really coincide.

She's a delightful student to work with, and appreciates individual help. She comes alive when you sit down to work with her on an individual basis. She exhibits a great deal more effort and is interested in a variety of subjects. She seems to wake up and is no longer so lethargic.

If I could start the year over with this student, I would try to arrange my classes so I could take some of the less able readers and work with them on an individual basis. I would try to test her to find the specific areas of weakness, and then perhaps give her five or ten minutes a day in some kind of remedial situation. I'm really not familiar with what they are.

The reading support teacher's job is to give individual help to students that the classroom teacher doesn't have time for; she meets with them for individual or small group instruction.

One of the first things I would do district-wide would be to decrease the number of students in the first-grade rooms to a maximum of fifteen. I would also like to arrange the primary grades on a



promotional basis which matches their reading skill development. This would eliminate a student being pushed ahead and confronted with tasks he is not ready to perform and have to face failure. I feel that every time a student faces failure, he develops a psychological problem which makes it much more difficult to learn. Having smaller classes and giving teachers a chance to give students individual help could remedy the weaknesses as they come along and not wait until the teacher and the student are frustrated.

My conceptions of diagnostic teaching have been very incidental. I'm not aware of the phonics and work attack skills that primary teachers teach to children. I've learned a great deal these last couple of years as I began working with the new reading series. In the upper grades there is a tendency to have the students read silently and answer comprehension questions rather than to look for specific individual weaknesses in reading, so I really don't understand what reading is all about.

I would like to go back into the teachers' records and see if I can discover where it begins to mention the student's difficulties. This would also give me some idea of the grade level they are reading on and which sort of skills they have missed. If the problems are serious enough, you can send the student to the reading support teacher. I would also like to look into the family background of the student. I would like to know whether he came from a large or small family. I find increasingly the students with reading problems come from broken homes. I also find that students with reading problems have problems in everything they do, except perhaps recess and gym. They have marked themselves

as failures. I have a tendency to try to zero in on the ones that I think I can help rather than try to spread myself thin and not do a good job with anyone. If a student's attitude is one of "don't bother me," then usually I don't bother him. I help the ones who really respond.

I would define my role as being a tutor to the student who is experiencing difficulties in reading.

One of the most valuable parts of my education was when I actually worked with children. Also I think it is important when my instructor is someone who has actually taught in the elementary classroom. They seem more realistic than those who have never taught. Courses were most valuable when I could apply things that I had learned in my own classroom rather than a lot of this busy work that you throw in the wastebasket at the end of the year. It's like having to prove yourself and your capabilities. I also didn't like courses from instructors who had the courses all made out before they met the class. I got the feeling they said the same words year after year. Another thing I found frustrating was when the instructor came into a situation with a closed mind and left you with the feeling that if you disagreed you would be graded down for your opinions.

I have the feeling that I have gotten into a rut and I would like to go back and review and update some of the areas that I studied twenty years ago. I would like to learn how to work with twenty-five to thirty students on an individual basis. I feel very inadequate in this respect. I would like to have children learning what they need to learn, even though it's different from what someone else is learning. The only way I know of going about this would be actually to go into a situation

where someone would be talented in this respect and, hopefully, be allowed to work with them for an extended period of time. I want to be with someone who does individualized teaching, watch what they do, see how they relate to children, observe the methods and materials, and then sit down and add to my own creativity. I find that for me I may come up with the ideas, but when I actually get in the classroom situation I revert back to what is secure for me instead of saying, "I'll go ahead and do it." I wonder how many teachers feel that way. They'll go over the same thing year after year just because they're afraid of what's going to happen if they change. I find that when the peace and order I like disappear I revert back to what I'm secure with and somehow I've got to break that because I feel I'm not giving the students what they should get and I know that I'm weak and failing in my approach with the problem students.

## Teacher Seven: Second Interview

The students were placed into groups by the reading support teacher. They were placed into various levels on the basis of comprehension. I didn't do any further testing except to check out their inferential thinking ability.

The students in the lowest group were not able to write. This girl has a very low I-Q. Her whole family has problems, especially the mother. This student has severe emotional problems. The rest were just average for their age level. They all came from a very unstructured classroom. These three had never been taught cursive writing because the teacher they had did not teach cursive writing. They also had difficulty putting thoughts down on paper because they had not been required to do writing.

What would I do if I had this group again next year? Well, it's sort of hard; there are things that I would like to do, but I think you are limited when you have a large number of children. I think one of the things I would do would be to feel free to leave the basal readers. Instead of following the basal readers page by page, I would like to test the students and then zero in on the things they don't know. But again this is my problem in dealing with large groups. I realize that in order to do a good job, it almost has to be individual and the reality of it for me is that I don't have time to do it. I don't have enough preparation time. If all I had to do was teach reading that would be great, but I must prepare for all the other subjects. So I continue to fall back on the materials that the series provides, the workbook pages, the supplementary work that is supposed to give them practice.

I don't do any kind of evaluation; it was mostly just subjective, based on the fact that they got through the book and covered the work. They will be retested at the beginning of the year, and this should give some indication of their growth, but this test is strictly on comprehension. They don't have testing on any word analysis skills. If a student still tests out at the same level, somebody's got a problem--either I failed to teach or the student failed to learn. You can't go over the same stories next year, and so the student is usually put ahead.

This student has a defeatist attitude. He didn't want to do anything that required writing. He would have a difficult time recalling what he had read. He disliked anything to do with reading.

This student had a bad reading problem; the book was very difficult for her. She didn't like to read and admitted it to me when she did her workbook assignments or any written assignment. She would just put down anything to get through it or didn't even bother doing it. She was convinced she didn't have the ability and so it was why try, a bad attitudinal problem. So what am I going to do? I'm locked into this program. For someone like her I would like to leave the basal and give her an alternate program.

If someone could have given this girl some remedial work around third grade, I think she would have been an entirely different individual. Her parents were going through a divorce during this time, and she lost a grade somewhere along the line. Whenever I would work with her individually she would make excellent progress, but then you can't work individually with one child all the time.

This boy is a very sad boy; always has a sad face. He really

shouldn't have been in my group. There were also family problems, and he had a very negative attitude. He antagonized the children around him and so he ended up having problems at home and in school. He was put in my level because he just wouldn't buckle down and do the work. I didn't think he belonged in my reading group.

Analysis of Teacher Seven

Lacking enjoyment and motivation to read, limited sight vocabulary, and word analysis skills are distracting behaviors for students experiencing difficulties in reading. A child who is physically exhausted during the school day compounds the problems of helping children grow in reading competency.

This teacher teaches the problem readers in a group situation as time and class size do not permit individual attention. Teaching procedures are the same for all students, and this teacher follows the teacher's guide that accompanies the basal reading series in the classroom. The special reading teacher does provide additional assistance to a few students.

This teacher's concept of diagnostic teaching is very limited. She lacks an understanding of the knowledge of teaching beginning reading skills. Previous teaching experience was with upper grade students, where silent reading and writing answers to comprehension questions were the main areas of focus of the reading lesson. Little individual attention was given a student who was not able to read the assigned material. This teacher's role is that of a tutor. Background course work in reading either pre- or in-service did not help this teacher develop competences to work with the student having reading problems. Also classes at the university level limited individual growth and creative thinking. This teacher feels a need to change her teaching style, but she lacks self-confidence to launch into a program that she feels would help her meet the needs of students experiencing difficulties in reading. Two areas of frustration were class size and her lack of confidence in feeling free enough to digress from the basal reader.

Teacher Eight Interview Data

## First Interview

First I checked the records in the classroom files. I then tested this student by asking him to read a paragraph in the material at his reading level, and if he was having too much difficulty, I would move him down to another book. I worked with him around thirty minutes per day. On two days I would do the reading, because it would take him so long and he got tired easily. Usually he will work. We would read two pages of a certain story and then talk about it. Sometimes I have him tell me the story in his own words. I would put words on the board and have him work with these words. I will have him mark the vowels, mark endings of words, or give me the family of certain words. I work with him in the spelling book because he has difficulty working independently. He has a short attention span. I used only phonics with this child because he has a difficult time sounding out the words.

I would like to find out what part of schooling this child failed. What did he miss so badly that he is having this problem? He seems to understand pretty well but can't pronounce words. Sometimes he sees words that are not even there, and yet when I ask him questions he seems to know what it is all about, even though he had read it completely different. This really puzzles me and I would like to find out what is going on.

I feel very comfortable working with this child. I feel good usually when he understands what he's supposed to do.

If I could start over with this child I would get him into a more comfortable book. I would probably start from scratch, going



back to the alphabet and beginning and ending sounds.

I was fortunate enough to have an excellent critic teacher during student teaching and I think I really learned a lot from her. She was one of my inspirations.

I don't think I would change much of what is going on in my classroom or in the school. I think I am doing the best I can with these students.

I have been watching students having difficulty. I don't really know what to do with them. I've tried to have these students put into special programs and sit in the meeting not knowing what they are talking about. I have always felt that I would like to know more about what this testing is all about.

Sometimes I know a student is having difficulty by looking at his face. When a student doesn't feel like reading and you see him doing something else that doesn't involve reading, I know there is a problem. I try to find out what the problems are, but it is very difficult for me.

I feel my role is more or less trying to make the work a little easier for the student that is having difficulty.

The most valuable part of my education was when I was able to do my student teaching. I was learning with the children and this is not the same thing as sitting in a classroom listening to someone talk about teaching. I cannot think of the least valuable part of my education.

I would like to learn whether I'm doing something right or wrong for the student. It's too bad that you have to learn by trial and error. I guess if someone could give me specific feedback, this would be helpful.

### Teacher Eight: Second Interview

When the students came into second grade, I had all of them read in a second-grade book. As they began making errors I would give them a book at a lower reading level. The lower group became very large and they knew each other so well I divided them into two low groups.

This low group had difficulty with phonics. They would read even though it didn't make any sense; they would just keep on going.

This group had to go all the way back to the basics. They really didn't know anything about reading.

If I could start this year over again I would have tested them more to find out exactly where they were having difficulty instead of starting over from the beginning. I think that would have been more helpful and maybe that way I would save myself more time and they wouldn't have to repeat things that they have already learned. This student reads better than this one and I don't know why.

I like working with the faster students. They are more of a challenge, and I think I can help them more. They were more independent and pretty much on their own. The faster students are very good at working together and helping each other.

The school gives an achievement test and that's the only type of evaluation that was given to the entire class. I told the parents to work with their children during the summer, so hopefully next year's teacher will not have to review with this class.

I spend about thirty to forty-five minutes in the morning and twenty to thirty minutes in the afternoon on reading. They are much better behaved in the morning than in the afternoon.

This student has a very short attention span. He loves to visit and carry on a conversation, but ignores his work, especially writing or copying things. He doesn't seem to care very much about his work. He must always be urged and pushed. His mother did most of the work for him, and he expected the teachers to do the work for him in school.

These two students are very quiet. If they didn't understand anything, they would rather ruin it than come and ask how to do it. They read one phrase at a time with very weak comprehension.

These two students were from Spanish-speaking families and had difficulty with the English language. This made reading very difficult.

### Analysis of Teacher Eight

Poor word recognition skills, short attention span, lack of motivation, and reading words that did not make sense were behaviors that this teacher used to describe problem readers. The reading process is a puzzle to this teacher and this was expressed as she tried to describe particular reading behaviors.

Because this teacher lacked knowledge of the problems experienced by problem readers, remediation techniques were not specifically designed to meet the problem areas. The basal text was used, along with some supplementary materials in spelling and phonics. Individual time was provided within the school day in trying to figure out a child's problems and then set up some ways to meet these needs.

This teacher is frustrated with her lack of knowledge. Any conception of diagnostic teaching involves only a beginning awareness that the student is having difficulty. Watching a student's behavior during reading time was the only means used to gather diagnostic data. Problem readers are difficult to understand, and this teacher's role perspective in diagnostic work is limited to making the reading task as simple as possible. Teacher education was sufficient and the student teaching experience provided an inspiration. This teacher seems to learn best when given feedback about her work with problem readers. She expresses a desire to obtain enough knowledge regarding diagnostic teaching so she will be able to make intelligent contributions when attending special meetings regarding students who are experiencing difficulties in reading and learning.

Teacher Nine Interview Data

## First Interview

This student had a strong desire to read, although he has a great deal of difficulty remembering vocabulary words. He tries very hard to sound out words, but can't blend the sounds together. Concentrating is also difficult for him, and comprehension is very difficult. He is a very competitive child and likes game type activities. He loves anything with science and math, but when it comes to reading I have to tell him every word. He might be able to say certain words one day and I think he's finally got it, but the next day he will have forgotten everything. It is very frustrating. Maybe it is an emotional problem.

I didn't use any specific materials to diagnose his problems. The reading diagnostician gave him a series of tests, and I don't know the results of these tests. I did give him an Informal Inventory and he enjoyed listening to himself on the tape. I worked with him on blending activities. We would keep the sessions very short because of his attention span. If you give him too much he just gets very frustrated. When he would succeed on a certain level, I would give him little treats.

I had to spend a great deal of time with this student because he could not read directions. He needs a great deal of self-confidence and assurance building. He knows he's a poor reader, and it shows. I work with him about half an hour each day.

In a reading group, it is almost impossible to keep his attention. If there is an animal in the book, he wants to know everything

about the animal, and loses complete track of what is going on in the story. I have to remind him to keep his mind on a particular sentence.

I used many games with this student. He needed concrete things in his hands. Sometimes it would take two weeks to complete a particular skill. We worked with vocabulary cards in a game-type activity. He would only work under these circumstances. He did make progress, but not really as much as he should with his ability. Reading was just so frustrating to him.

I would like him to have a complete physical. I think maybe his problem is medical. He does have home problems, but I think the mother is giving him a great deal of support. I still haven't ruled out an emotional problem. I think he is on medication and the mother really doesn't approve of her child being on drugs.

He is a very sweet child. He is really nice, polite, and very sensitive to others in the class. They also get upset with him when he can't read. Sometimes he will cry. It is so frustrating for him, because he wants to do a good job. He also doesn't want to let his mother down. His older brother is really a whiz and this makes it very difficult for him. I really enjoy working with this student.

I really worked hard with this student. I don't think I would do things any differently with him if I had it to do over. I spent as much time with him as with the whole class, working especially with games and things I had made especially for him. He was out of my room for special education and also for speech, and I think this was too much for him to handle. It would have been much better to have him in my room most of the time.

The special education teacher was the most help to me this year. The reading teacher could have helped, but she wasn't very effective. She is responsible for lots of other jobs in our building, like student council, etc., and she just doesn't have time to work with teachers. She's not doing the job that she is supposed to be doing. She set up a tutor for this student because she didn't have time to give him the extra help he needed. The tutor would work with him on spelling lists.

I would like to have time to set up an individual reading program that was effective. I need help with record keeping, developing listening centers, and setting up learning centers. There are so many neat materials you can buy for reading, and I wish I could have more film strips with stories and cassettes. Also, I really like game activities and wish I had time to make games that would help individual students with reading. I like the hands-on kinds of activities, materials for cooking which makes learning more enjoyable and meaningful. I have a difficult time getting away from the basal materials and feel that I can do a good job of teaching skills.

The students were my biggest influence in understanding what reading is all about. Also some of my college professors.

Most of the things that I do with students are just feeling kinds of things. It just feels right at that time. I think my own personal experiences with my students and how I feel they are doing is the biggest factor in figuring out specific difficulties. It's kind of a gut feeling. The test scores that come back reinforce what I have already discovered.

I think my role is a director, directing them in the areas they

need to follow. I want to find the key to help them overcome the specific difficulty. If I can't help them, then I would direct someone else to help, like the social worker, etc.

The most valuable part of my education was that part of my graduate program that dealt directly with students. Unfortunately, it wasn't enough. I was really lost during student teaching.

I would like to know more about reading. It's so complex, and I find myself very inadequate at times. When I see difficulties in my own classroom, I would like to know what to do without having to send the students to someone else.



## Teacher Nine: Second Interview

This student wants to be in fourth grade, but he was retained in third grade. He reads at first-grade level, has very poor retention, and just doesn't have it. He had a very poor self-concept when he came in at the beginning of the year, due to his retention. He is small in size and fits in perfectly with the second graders.

This student was hyperactive and couldn't sit still long enough to get any kind of learning accomplished. The only way I could make any progress was on a one-to-one basis, so I had to pull him out of the reading group and work with him on an individual basis.

I don't call my groups robins or bluejays, but use the name of a child in the group. They were grouped basically because they had the same strong points, good silent readers, good creative writers, etc. I think most of the students who were having difficulty were also the very immature students. Trying to have them comprehend a story was almost impossible for them. They didn't know what to write and were afraid they were going to make wrong answers even though I would tell them to put down what they thought. I gave the word opposites test in the beginning of the year, along with looking at the records from last year.

I made individual worksheets for the stories. The workbook with this reader deals with skills and vowel sounds and very little comprehension. The child that was repeating this grade was placed into another series so he didn't repeat the same books.

We had the students pass a series of objective skill tests.

This gave me an idea of where the students were at and which skills they needed to work on.

This student was very difficult to work with and took a great deal of my patience. Reading for him was impossible unless you sat right with him. The workbook was also very difficult. I've tried to get a tutor for him, but they didn't particularly enjoy working with him. He was just so off the wall all the time. I finally got a parent aide to work with him. I'm really worried about him. He is really kind of paranoid. Nobody likes him and they would laugh at his bright red hair.

I don't think I would do anything different with these students. They missed a great deal of school, and I talked with the mothers about doing extra work with them this summer.

I was always one of the first to request student teachers or student helpers. Most of the students having difficulty in reading are also experiencing difficulty in oral expression, and this extra help from student teachers lets me do things that you can't do when you are in the room by yourself.

### Analysis of Teacher Nine

Short attention span, extreme word recognition and comprehension difficulties, along with emotional problems were described by this teacher as typical behaviors of students with reading problems. In some cases students' self-concept was low and the home situation did not support the school in trying to help students learn to read.

This teacher requested that some students be given individual tests, but she never received the results of those tests. Additional time was set aside for individual work in phonics. Games and concrete materials were used, along with a behavior reinforcement program. Special tutors, special education teacher, speech teacher, and the reading diagnostician worked with the problem readers during the school year.

Hard work and frustration describes the feelings of this teacher in working with students experiencing difficulties in reading. Lack of knowledge about the reading process is a basic frustration. A conception of diagnostic teaching was not part of her perspective and she feels her role is that of a director of reading. She expressed uncomfortable feelings with her role and wants to be directly responsible for students' growth. Teacher education did not provide the necessary preparation for working with individual problems and most of the decisions are made at the time of instruction with very little advanced planning. Being able to individualize instruction is a high priority area of learning for this teacher as she struggles to meet individual learning problems.

Teacher Ten Interview Data

## First Interview

This student reads with very little expression, is extremely slow in sounding out words, and is generally weak in word attack skills. His mother is slow in reading and therefore she can't give him any help. Sounding out words is very difficult. I did a great deal of phonetic skills with him and as the year wore on he was able to feel greater success. I did an informal inventory with him.

I worked with this student for an hour three days a week. I was not scheduled to work with him, but he needed it so badly.

I usually start every day reading some kind of poetry to the students. I did many things like this, because this student's background was so limited. He also read to me individually. I gave him worksheets to do for practice and I prepared them so he would have success. I didn't do this the entire year, but felt I needed to spend time on skills. I wanted success to be the predominant goal for the year.

I would want to know how this student goes about doing his work. Does he have a sight vocabulary? Does he have word attack skills? Is he relying on context? Can he use sequencing and recall? What is the comprehension ability? Does he only have factual recall? I would have to take into consideration what he reads and what background he brings to the reading process.

I feel comfortable working with this student. In absolute truth there were days when I became very frustrated with him. He shows very little affection. He has learned to hide it or he doesn't know how to

express feelings. He would be a very difficult child to work with, but I found that when he began feeling successful it began to show that he felt good about himself.

If I could repeat the year over, I would do everything with this student on a one-to-one basis for the entire year. He cannot function alone.

I am a person who basically wants a certain amount of reassurance that what I'm doing is helpful to the people I work with. Teachers who found the things that I was doing with students helpful and then told me about it was very reinforcing to me.

I would construct a room that had individual learning centers. I don't think all learning should be individual; there were portions of the day when students would come together for group activities. We operate in isolation very little, and I think you can overdo individualized work. Although with this student I did want more time to work with him alone.

I would like to get my hands on more low vocabulary, high interest materials. There are other manipulative things which would be excellent. The teacher is far more important than the materials.

I have taught special education students, and then I was forced into looking at the student that was having difficulty. I provided the materials, most of which I made myself. This background was very helpful for me as I began working with problem readers. I don't always give formal tests, but I could tell within a week after school starts where the students are reading, what they are doing, and what kind of problems they are having. That's an easy area for me, but I don't do it in

the formal way. I don't know what my basis of understanding is, but I feel very comfortable working with a student for a while, and can then tell you what I see and feel about the reading ability. I hope this would be the same thing I would see on a formal test. I do most of my testing by instinct, and I always see the child for a period of time before giving any specific tests. I want to know and feel something about them as persons. I think this is more important than any specific tests.

I find it very easy for me to establish a rapport with students. I am not easily discouraged about errors and mistakes. I feel most students want to learn, and I know there are factors that get in the way of student learning. I really don't let them mess around and do their own thing, and I establish this relationship rather quickly.

I feel my role is a teacher. I'm not their buddy and I'm not their friend. I'm in the classroom to teach, and the student is there to learn, so I try to make it as pleasant as possible. I establish immediately that I'm in authority and so we best get on with the learning. I do this in a non-threatening kind of way.

I don't think there was a least valuable part of my education, because I always try to take something away from every learning situation.

I would like to complete my degree in reading. I am finding that the reading philosophy is changing. They are getting away from talking about word fragments and isolated sounds to looking at larger language units.

## Teacher Ten: Second Interview

This student is a third grader with about early first-grade skills. He has a history of being absent from school. I tried to make him feel comfortable and have some way he could succeed each day. His home background didn't reinforce the school learning experience.

These two were the lowest achievers I had. They needed work with the very basic word recognition skills. This student repeated second grade and had a speech difficulty. He ended up seeing the speech teacher, the Title I teacher, besides being in my class. This student was asthmatic and missed on the average of three days a week of school. This student is very slow and deliberate and I think by nature he is going to operate this way the rest of his life.

I don't use any formal measures with these students. The units provide post-tests, but I don't use them religiously. I don't do a lot of formal evaluation because to me I can't take six weeks on a story. That would be extremely frustrating. We read a whole lot of different books and we don't read the same material every day. I use basal books, Scholastic books, and library books. I just can't go onto the next stories in a series.

This student relies heavily on graphic similarities and what he does with words I'm sure isn't clear to him. Once he knows a specific rule he utilizes it well, but is apt to make what I call an educated guess. He reads very slowly, very deliberately. He does understand what he reads but goes at everything very slowly, and this I think is a family trait. I think it's going to be a problem for him because people are accustomed to wanting instantaneous answers.

This child is going through a very severe emotional trauma. The father she adored just walked out and the mother is in bed most of the time with back problems. One day she reads very well and the next day she really cannot attend long enough to read at all. She doesn't need phonics. Word attack is not an area of difficulty. Once she reads something she knows it. I doubt whether she knows any rules.

I think I would do the same thing next year if I had these same students. I did see a change in most of them. Most of them don't benefit from phonics, they need practice reading in context and sentence structure clues and this kind of thing.



Analysis of Teacher Ten

Weak word attack skills, lack of understanding of how language sounds, physical and emotional problems describe behaviors of students experiencing difficulties with reading. This teacher also believes that the supportive influence of the parents contributes to success in reading.

Remediation techniques always involve individual instruction. Time was spent with extra phonics lessons. This teacher feels that working with self-concept along with providing experiences that are successful and enjoyable are the most important techniques in working with students having reading difficulties.

At times this teacher was frustrated in her work, but she does have confidence in her ability to teach. Her approach to teaching diagnostically is viewed as being informal. She uses tests only after having established a working relationship with students. This teacher has grown in her knowledge of the reading process. The give and take process has allowed her to put together her own philosophy of teaching students experiencing difficulties in reading. She takes in helpful information from pre- and in-service and her own professional reading. Successful teaching to this teacher means also being a learner.

Phase TwoTeacher One Interview Data

## First Interview

This student's biggest problem was answering comprehension questions. She was anxious to finish her work and really didn't understand what she was doing. I think it is the fault of the reading series. There isn't enough material on comprehension.

I used the Iowa Basic Skills Test at the beginning of the year and used the results so I could place the students into groups. I also used the basal series units to evaluate comprehension, vocabulary work, phonic skill, and study skills.

I spend forty-five minutes teaching reading every day. The school is ability grouped for reading. Some children come in and some leave at quarter to ten and stay until ten thirty. Some days are devoted to class discussion and going over work that they have completed. Most of the time is spent introducing the lesson, reading the story silently, working on ditto sheets, or doing lessons in skill books.

This student does not listen one hundred per cent to what I'm saying. I'm not sure why she has trouble with comprehension. She does well with her vocabulary and has difficulty with comprehension questions. I don't know why and I don't know how to find out why.

This student would listen to instructions for ten to fifteen minutes while I discussed what to do on the work sheets. Then she would work alone for the rest of the period while the rest of the class is also working silently. The room is very quiet.

I have the next to the top reading group, and there were not

any specific reading problems in this group. The materials I used were the materials that went with the stories in the reading series. We used the skill book with each lesson. Because the reading problems were not that great we didn't do any extra remedial work. I did find that I spent more time with comprehension this year, because the children really seemed to have trouble. I gave them more comprehension questions and worked with the reading consultant to find out new ideas about what types of questions to ask rather than using the ones that were written up in the book.

I don't know how I could measure achievement in reading. I would want to know if a student comprehended what he was reading, and if he could read a passage and tell me basically what it was about. I think they should be able to read a paragraph and be able to find the main idea of the paragraph but I'm not sure how to measure this area. I am not satisfied with the Iowa Basic Skills Test, because it doesn't give specific information in the reading part. I think next year we'll be doing something different, but I don't know what test will be used.

I feel good about working with my reading class this year. I thought they did a really super job in many areas. I think the reason they're in the second group and not in the top group is because they tend to be lazy and they are perhaps not as motivated to be achievers. The students in the top group are the achievers and they want to be at the top. Students in the second to the top group, even though they score high on tests, are not the students who are really anxious to get an "A"; they're satisfied with a "B."

I suppose if I could start the year over I'd probably do a little more with comprehension. I may even divide the room into two groups and

take those that were having difficulty in comprehension along a little slower. I have thirty-one students and they probably should be divided into two groups. That's very difficult, though, because there's so much correcting of papers and workbooks when you have thirty-one students, but I think it probably should have been done.

I didn't really need any specific help because I didn't have the difficult reading problems. The reading consultant was very helpful in helping me with comprehension questions, seeing the importance of asking various levels of questions. I don't think kids understand what they read, and then what sense is there of reading? Vocabulary is important, too, but if you don't know what the word means, you can't comprehend what the sentence means.

I would really like to have a full-time aide. Next year I will have the top reading group and I will probably have three groups and do a lot more individualized instruction, letting students go ahead on their own and do special projects. When you are all alone, with thirty-one students, and you have all the papers to check and material to get ready, even money isn't going to help if you don't have some extra help, like an aide. An aide would be great.

I really don't have any conception of diagnostic teaching. The various principals I've had and various reading consultants, the students, and the textbooks have given me help in understanding the reading process. I've taught reading to the bottom readers and to the fast readers, and so after a number of years you develop what you think is important in reading. The reading consultant was very beneficial. Teachers should have more training in how to teach reading. Many come into the program teaching elementary students with no training at all, just

one methods course in the teaching of reading. Phonics instruction was new to me when I began teaching. I learned to read by the sight word method.

I think if students don't understand the vocabulary, then they need to spend all their time on vocabulary. If they're not comprehending what they read, they need to take some time to really work on comprehension. The principles that influence my teaching are based in part on what I see the class not understanding.

My role is a very important one, because if you can't read, you can't do anything else. You can't do math if you can't read, so teaching reading is very important. I'm so glad they are going to teach reading in sixth grade next year. I think a teacher's role is a tremendous role. I think you have to work with parents and you have to really understand your students. You have to find out what's wrong and work at it. It's not always easy.

My education got me a degree. So much of the stuff that we had to do did not help at all in teaching children to read. It would be nice to learn what is expected of students at third or fourth grade levels. Teachers need a wider background in all subject areas. Some courses were not valuable, because you didn't know what was being talked about. If you could teach first, and then go take courses, teaching would make more sense. What a lot of teachers need is how to keep a class quiet so they can learn something. If you want the students to move about, teach them to do it quietly.

If I was younger, I would probably take time off and get my M.A. I'd probably spend quite a bit of time learning how to teach reading and developing more skills in teaching science.

## Teacher One: Second Interview

The top group always got their assignment finished and did it well.

The middle group did their assignment most of the time and did it fairly well, but sometimes had a little problem.

The low group did their work most of the time, but sometimes couldn't find their papers and didn't quite finish their work. They were not as dedicated to getting their work done as students in the top group.

If students don't finish their work I would keep them in at recess. Sometimes I would just say "Well, you'll just have to take the grade you got because you don't have time to come in and I don't have the time." I even on occasion talked to parents and told them the work was not being done, and for a while the work was finished.

I use the basal materials with the low students, ditto masters that go with the material, and the workbook. Some are skills in vocabulary, some comprehension, and some literature. All the students had to read library books. Everybody had to read a certain number and then do a project related to the book they read. At the beginning of the year I gave out prizes to those who read the most pages and I found some students cheating, so I quit. I quit the prizes, but they still had to keep reading. The low group didn't do very well along this line. We also did oral reading selections. One girl wouldn't do it and one boy ran to the library the day it was due and picked out a selection just as the reading class started. He did not prepare himself at all, but didn't do such a bad job in front of the class. The students in the

group read quite a few more books than these down here. Maybe that's why they are in the low group.

This group is next to the top. There were thirty students better at reading than these. I like working with this group. Next year I will have the top group.

I like the idea of ability grouping in reading. I couldn't cope with all the groups if I had a self-contained class. If you didn't group somehow or another, you'd go absolutely crazy trying to teach all the students how to read. I have students in my home room with a range of reading ability from first to ninth. Trying to get material ready for that many groups in a day would drive you bananas. I really like the ability grouping; I think it could be improved, but I'm not sure how. Maybe I could have divided this group into two groups, but it was not such a large group. Some of the kids could have done more than they were assigned, but then I don't know if it's always good to assign the bright students extra work. I wish someone would tell me the right approach. Next year we will group for math. I can see a lot of good in it. The one bad thing is that when a child is not doing his work you have a hard time finding him. This one girl could have done much better in reading if she had been in my home room so I could have kept her after school all the time. Do you know of any materials that will motivate the unmotivated? This child's handwriting was atrocious and his spelling wasn't too good, so when he had to write creatively it hampered him and he didn't want to look dumb. He could have been in the top group if he had had more ability as far as spelling and handwriting are concerned and if he had been more motivated to finish up what he was doing and cared about his work. He really didn't care if he got it done or not.

What do you do with a ten-year-old who hasn't cared since kindergarten? When I got him he'd already had five years of school. I'd like to find out what is really important for kids to learn in reading. The slow students have a great deal of difficulty with sequence. All the ditto masters have ten items in sequencing. I think this is too many. They are doing real well in vocabulary. We discuss all the new words, then the meaning, and then if we have a worksheet on it they usually do pretty well. They have a lot of trouble with decoding and comprehension. I have been giving them more questions, especially factual-type questions. I don't know how kids fail to learn to read. I'm not looking forward to the year after next when I have the lowest group, because I don't know what to do with them. Why can't they read by the time they are ten? What's happened?

This boy is no problem at all. He will do the assignment and he will understand it most of the time. He won't ask a lot of questions.

This student will ask me the assignment right after I have given all the instructions to the class. I have to remind her to keep working. She will be looking across the room or looking out the window playing with something, in general just not doing her work. I always keep an eye on her, just walk by and say a few words like "don't stop now" or "do you know what you're doing?"

I must be kind to this student because she has sort of an inferiority complex and she doesn't like it one bit if I give her constructive criticism. If she forgets her work, it's my fault. She always blames everybody else when she forgets to do something. Her parents will take my side and ask what they can do to help her. She is a nice girl in a lot of ways.



This student is in a great hurry to get her work finished. She doesn't always listen to instructions. This student is sensitive and cries easily. He is a B/A student. He didn't always turn his work in, and he tended to be a bit lazy and quite sloppy. I think in his home room he was somewhat of a troublemaker. In reading class he didn't have time to get into trouble.

This student is quite intelligent but I didn't put him in the top group because he didn't have his work turned in on time.

This student was probably my brightest student except that she was sloppy and careless in her writing and in answering the questions.

This student worked hard, probably above her ability. She is also sensitive and has a home problem, but she's not letting it affect her work.

This boy left his work home all the time or couldn't find it. This one always had his papers but they weren't finished.

This girl wasn't totally honest with me. She was the one that cheated on the book report.

I was really surprised at the number of fifth grade students this year who resorted to tears. One girl in my home room cried because she was being moved up in reading from one group to the next.

I can't read this boy's handwriting, but his work is excellent if you can read it.

### Analysis of Teacher One

The inability to comprehend was the main behavior this teacher described when discussing students experiencing difficulties in reading. Being lazy, sloppy, and inattentive during class assignments and directions were also behaviors of problem readers. Turning in assignments on time was an important behavior for students to develop.

Specific materials used with these students included the basal reader, ditto masters, and workbooks. All students in this ability group used the same materials. Testing was done by the reading specialist, and when time permitted she would help this teacher with ideas for improving comprehension. Materials are the answer to this teacher's understanding of the reading process. She also feels that the basal materials she is now using lack the necessary information for helping students comprehend what they are reading. Ability grouping is the answer to some of the frustrations in teaching large numbers of students. Time and paper work make it impossible for this teacher to think about ways to individualize instruction.

Teaching students to read is an important part of this teacher's role in the classroom, but she doesn't have a clear understanding of the knowledge needed to teach the problem readers. She does try and get the parents to co-operate when a problem arises. Quiet classrooms and completed assignments are an important part of the perspective of working with problem readers. Teacher education in reading was not valuable. It wasn't until several years of teaching that this teacher gained helpful knowledge about teaching. Her education granted her a degree and with many years of teaching experience she is still confused about how to work with students experiencing difficulty in reading.

Teacher Two Interview Data

## First Interview

Basically, this child is pretty unsure of himself and doesn't want to do anything without first checking to be sure he's doing it right. One of the biggest problems in reading is with phonics and sounding out words. I think most of the difficulty comes from the fact that he has a speech problem. I don't think he hears what he is saying, so this causes problems in sounding out words. He's a good worker if he knows exactly what he's doing; then he will work hard. If he is at all unsure, then he gives up or will copy from someone else.

At the beginning of the year, all the third graders were tested and I used the recommendations from the second grade teacher for placement into specific reading groups. I was going to have a self-contained classroom this year, but it didn't work out because the number of reading groups would have been impossible to handle. Once the students were placed, I basically used the basal text material and informal paragraphs to find out if they had any specific reading problems.

I had this student three days a week for an hour and two days a week for one half hour. He would be in a group that received fifteen to twenty minutes of direct reading instruction per day.

This student would be given an assignment in comprehension to complete from the previous day's reading while I was working with another group. When I was teaching his group we would talk about the story and then work on some specific skill development lesson with a ditto sheet for reinforcement.

I would always try to modify my lessons for this child. He

would not have as many different assignments, and I would make the work easier for him. Basically, I didn't do a whole lot with him this year as far as his particular reading problem was concerned. I would make sure I didn't put him on the spot or ask him to pronounce a word that I thought he might not be able to read, thus causing him to become self-conscious. I didn't do a whole lot as far as making his assignments especially for him because of his particular reading problem.

I would like to find out just what sounds he has mastered and I would test this out by having him read orally.

I don't really have any problem in working with this child. Basically he is not that far behind. His problem is not a common problem, one that I've run across so far. I would like to have more help from the speech teacher. Looking back at it now, I can see many things that I didn't do. He is probably the first child that I have had with a specific reading problem.

Basically, I would work closely with the speech therapist and get ideas from her on ways I could help with reading and find out if there were specific sounds that I just couldn't have expected of this child during this past year.

The remedial reading teacher is my main source of help. But the speech teacher could be a source, but I didn't see her in that role. These teachers are very busy and were not free to come into my classroom to help with problem readers. I could use the special teachers as resource people and maybe get some material and ideas. I think it would be much better for them to come into the classroom and see the child in the daily school environment.

I would really like to have more time to try and set up an individualized reading program. This takes time to gather materials to set up the program. I did individualize my mathematics program, but I think that it is much easier to individualize in mathematics. I feel more comfortable with mathematics than with reading.

Most of my concept of what reading is all about came from my undergraduate reading methods. You graduate with a very idealistic view of teaching, and it doesn't take long to find out that it isn't as black and white as I imagined. I found out about reading by working with students in and out of the classroom. I also learned a great deal from the basal reader, especially the teacher's guide. I really don't like the basal texts we are using. One day you may teach a skill in one story and fifty pages later you may work with it again. I would like to tear the books apart and organize them into a better sequence of skills. I'm a firm believer in a continuum of reading skills. I think they could eliminate three-fourths of the pages in the workbooks. They just seem to be time fillers, which unfortunately I'm just as guilty as others, as I also use workbooks as time fillers. If I had to justify my using workbooks I couldn't. I would like to develop a hierarchy of skills that could be taught using a variety of basal texts. I could use some stories from one text or workbook and some from another. This would take a great deal of time, but I feel it would be very beneficial. The basal text should not be the only source for teaching reading. I encouraged my students to read other books from the library. I even required them to read one book a month and then write up how they felt about the book and what they would do to interest other students to

read the book. They didn't enjoy this, but I wanted them to read something besides the basal text.

I see myself as a person trained to deal directly with the students. I want to be able to discover what the problems are and set up objectives to help with their problems. I would like to be able to go to the remedial reading teacher and say "I have a child who is having lots of problems in a certain area" and have her supply me with materials that I could use to help the student. This year I should have used the speech therapist. I also think librarians could be more helpful.

The most valuable undergraduate courses were those in which the instructor treated me like I was already a teacher. I like being confronted with the objectives that I will have when I'm teaching. Also I like instructors that give specific examples for accomplishing the objectives, and ask in-depth questions.

I know that for me student teaching was an excellent experience. Some students have a very poor experience and they end up not becoming teachers because of a poor student teaching experience. I did volunteer work in schools before I did my student teaching. This really gave me an understanding of what teaching was all about before going into my student teaching experience. Some of the methods courses were not very helpful. I didn't like any course in which the professor told the class that one-third of your grade will be based on class participation. You would then experience a whole term of nothing but people spilling off at the mouth and not saying anything.

I would like to take an extended period off from full-time teaching and learn as much as possible about racial awareness.

## Teacher Two: Second Interview

This ability group consists of students that are a year behind in reading. Most of our class time was spent in decoding skills, vowel sounds, and making sure they know all their beginning and ending consonant sounds and blends.

Most of the placement into groups was accomplished from last year's test scores and teacher recommendations. I didn't use any informal reading inventories.

Basically, I just used the materials and readers that were in the room. I think the spelling program also helped them with their phonics.

The two students in my top reading group received most of my time this year. I had to keep them pointing in the right direction. They were a challenge.

Asking me to think about what I would do if I had the year to do over makes me look critically at myself and I don't like what I see. If I had those slow students again next year I would spend more time making sure they were drilled in phonics. I feel that one of the ways it's going to get done is just by giving it to them over and over and making sure they understand it. I might even look at a systematic approach. I also might take some of the students out of the basal text and have them read trade books. Also, writing their own stories would be very helpful.

I didn't use any specific tests for diagnosing reading problems.

This student had always been reading in books that were below grade level and this year she was put in a book that was at grade level

and I really think it helped her morale quite a bit. The work was difficult but she got it done. Sometimes she would take it home. I think she had a real good year because it built up her confidence and it was good for her to see on her report card: reading on grade level. I think a lot of it was because she felt, "Look, I can do it. I'm in this reading group and it makes me feel good."



Analysis of Teacher Two

Lacking specific word recognition skills is the main behavior that shows up when a student is experiencing difficulties in reading. This lack of knowledge also contributes to a low self-concept. Speech problems were also mentioned as having a contributing factor to phonics understanding.

This teacher modified assignments for students in trouble with reading. In order not to embarrass this student, the teacher used the same materials with all students and made sure not to put the student on the spot during classroom discussions. The speech teacher and reading teacher were available, but time did not permit them to assist the teacher in the classroom setting.

This teacher has a beginning conception of the diagnostic reading process that developed in undergraduate teacher education classes. Within the classroom setting a perspective of his role has not been able to grow and develop. Mandated materials seem to have inhibited this teacher from meeting the individual needs of the students that are experiencing difficulties. Frustration with graduate and in-service work revolves around the lack of challenging university instructors who confront teachers with the skills of diagnostic teaching. This teacher is looking toward the time when individualized instruction centered around a sequence of skills will be the direction of a student-centered program which will meet the needs of students experiencing difficulties in reading.

Teacher Three Interview Data

I have a classroom of good readers, so I don't really have many extreme reading difficulties. Most of their problems are with phonic skills, sequencing events, and also some are weak in comprehension. Other than a combination of those three things I guess those are the biggest reading deficiencies that I have with this class. One student is weak in phonics. He doesn't pay attention to individual letters and has difficulty knowing how to attack a word. Sometimes he will attack a word in the middle instead of at the beginning. If I were to describe his reading behavior, it would be that he is careless when reading. His biggest reading problem is his weakness in phonics; comprehension isn't that weak.

I used an individual phonics inventory at the beginning of the year. That showed many weaknesses. I used a consonant test, a vowel test, and a blend test. I went through it with him and identified those things he was weak in so we would have something specific to use for remediation. It is not a standardized test but looks like the one the reading consultant uses when she tests the students.

During the first fifteen minutes of the reading period we have silent reading time. This student had a great deal of difficulty concentrating on a book. He just wouldn't be able to spend as much time concentrating as the other children. During the rest of the hour we would work in our reading texts and workbooks. He would have trouble following directions. As I said before, he was weak in sequencing skills, and comprehension was weak because of hurrying with his work. Some days during the reading period I would work with him individually

on vocabulary. When he would finish his assignments, he could work on activity cards that covered various skills. I also tried to work on his reading interests, which I feel was another problem. He lacked motivation. I gave him word attack tests to find out what skills were lacking. He also would work on an individualized spelling book during reading. It was a good book for him because it doesn't skip and jump around to various phonic skills. This book concentrates on one spelling pattern at a time and that helped him improve his phonic skills. We made a flash card file and he practiced that every day. I never had this student formally tested as I didn't think the problems were that urgent. I have given him the Gates Reading Test, but don't have the results.

One of his worries was that of having his work finished correctly, and he would always ask me, "Is this all right?" or "Does this sound all right?" I tried to make a point every day throughout the school year to remind him to take his time and do a good job; that's what he wanted to hear. It seems to have helped about as much as anything, getting his mind off the idea that doing his work was not a race or contest. This really didn't help very much, probably because with him he was always having to catch up because of his many absences. I wouldn't describe him as hyperactive, but he's always kind of unsettled. I didn't really use a specific remedial technique. I just continued to reassure him and didn't try to put pressure on him.

I really don't know what information I would want collected in order to check on this student's achievement. We get the results of the Gates Reading Test, but that's really not a reading assessment test. I give a phonics test and that's about all I have available to

use. The basal text does not provide any tests. There are a few phonics tests in the teachers' guide, but they aren't on ditto masters. These ditto masters are evaluation worksheets that are comprehensive and cover phonics skills that have been introduced in each unit. The Gates Reading Test measures comprehension and vocabulary and I hope to see an increase in vocabulary scores because we have really worked on it this year. Comprehension I expect will stay about the same level.

I am really frustrated working with this student. I had to keep myself from getting really impatient with him, because I felt that he needed someone who had lots of patience. I was really frustrated with his weakness in following directions and giving up and not reading things through from start to finish. I am trying to get his work habits straightened around so he can make more progress. He really isn't that weak in reading.

If I could do the year over I wish I could do more testing. With so many students you only have so much time to do oral diagnosis, and I find that is a very valuable time in learning, as it is the only time I hear them read orally. That really helps me find out where they are in reading and what specific problems they are having. I would also like to do an interest inventory with this student. Since I don't have this student in my room all day, it took longer to get to know him, and one may not find out any other difficulties unless I talk with the home room teacher. I would like to have a self-contained room if possible some day.

I did check with this student's home room teacher quite often and also with our reading consultant. I didn't have him tested officially,

but I did have her help me with finding different types of phonics materials and extra practice ideas that would be appropriate to help this student. She was the only person that I relied on for help. I am interested in getting away from the basal text. I would like to get into learning centers. I would like to see our school curriculum in reading organized around the learning center concept. If we have to continue to use the basal, I would like to have available a large amount of supplementary material, as we don't have enough books, games, and ditto materials to help the student who is having problems. Also, it would be great to have some more help in the classroom to work with students on an individual basis. It would also be helpful to have another reading consultant, as the one we have doesn't have enough time to spend in the classrooms. Also, I would like to have more testing materials available for my own use. I would like to go crazy with materials to support my concepts. It would be exciting to be nongraded.

My conceptions of diagnostic teaching came from graduate work and also a third-grade teacher who had many years of teaching experience. She was working on her master's and I became very interested in her diagnostic approach, and she helped me set up a phonics testing program. I also do a lot of reading in professional journals.

As far as I know we do not have any reading guidelines or objectives in this school. I have a curriculum guide in reading. I think our curriculum should be more structured and followed by all the teachers. Even though we all use the same materials, it doesn't necessarily mean we are all heading in the same direction.

My role is to do everything that I can for the students using

the materials that I have at my disposal. There's only so much you can do and as I said I do rely on the reading consultant.

The most valuable part of my education was my student teaching experience. It was much more valuable than sitting in any methods classes, as far as I'm concerned. I am really discouraged about going back to school at this point. I am very interested in learning centers and individualized learning, and would like to spend my time with the practical aspects that I can use in my classroom. I know a school that has the learning center concept, and I would like to go and visit this school and then spend time putting up my own learning centers.

## Teacher Three: Second Interview

I have the top readers of two classrooms, and for the most part I had them placed into three groups. I did have a boy who was by himself, but he moved away in January and my life was simplified a little bit because I could concentrate on the other students. I spent quite a bit of time with him because he was so advanced.

The reading consultant plays a big part in grouping the students for reading. I did give a phonics test, but that's about all the testing that I did.

I used two different basal readers with these students. They were weak in word attack skills and comprehension. I relied mainly on what was available, like workbooks and worksheets. I would check their reading on the informal inventories and find what weaknesses they were having and ditto off a worksheet that would give appropriate practice. Sometimes I would send these worksheets home.

I would like to have a formal testing procedure and have the children go through worksheets each day; then I could spend more time during the reading period on comprehension. That way I would be sure to cover the skills the students need rather than the hit and miss fashion of the workbook.

If I could do the year over again, I would try more silent reading and I think I would combine it with SRA. I would go back over the informal inventory at the end of the year to see what they had learned.

This student lacks self-confidence. His mother was very

worried about him and she was willing to give him a lot of help at home.

This student's mother also wanted her child to make gains in reading. She worked with him at home, but I think she overdid it. He never had a chance to rest and he became very upset. But he did finish two readers before the end of the year.

I always tried to work on comprehension with the students having difficulty, as the scores always show this is the weakest point.

This student was really upset with me at the end of the year. He had great difficulty concentrating for more than one day at a time. He will probably start out next year low. He missed a great amount of school and this hampered him and put him in a bad mood.

I liked working with all types of learners. The smaller the group, the nicer it is.

There is lots and lots of reading material available and I know at this point I would like to forget the basals altogether. I'm very interested in learning centers. I think this type of approach makes the curriculum relevant. You don't isolate the skills into separate subject areas.



### Analysis of Teacher Three

Reading problems described by this teacher are in the areas of word recognition, phonics, sequencing, and comprehension. Concentration and lack of motivation also prevent students from making progress in reading. Hurried and careless attention given to individual words was one student's major problem.

Individual attention and extra time within the group setting was provided in order to increase vocabulary and work on specific phonics and spelling skills. By not putting extra pressure on students, this teacher tried to motivate an interest in reading and school in general. No specific reading techniques were used and this teacher did consult with the child's homeroom teacher and the reading specialist for extra assistance.

This teacher is easily frustrated and impatient with students having reading difficulties. One of the main causes of frustration is not having the student in the classroom the entire day. A self-contained classroom would be helpful when you have a student who is frustrated and cannot read. Lack of time for individual or group testing, along with knowledge about appropriate tests to use, restricts this teacher's growth and insights into the students' reading problems. This teacher wants a type of diagnostic structure along with the freedom to set up her own program that will meet the needs of problem readers. Teacher education in reading was a discouraging experience for this teacher. She doesn't feel that any program is geared toward helping teachers develop a view of diagnostic teaching and the problem reader.

Teacher Four Interview Data

## First Interview

This student came into my room with a very poor attitude, not just toward school, but toward everything. His reading problems start at the very beginning. He was unsure and didn't want to read orally. He lacked a basic reading vocabulary and was very unsure of himself in all areas. Comprehension was very weak and he wasn't able to answer the questions at the end of the story. He couldn't do the reading by himself, but if I read it out loud to him and stopped after each page to discuss the information, he could begin the assignment. He could not understand the directions in the workbook or worksheets. I usually had to be with him and go over all the questions orally. I wanted to get him to try to read the directions.

The Iowa Basic Skills Test was given at the beginning of the year, but we don't see the results until much later, so it's a little late to do any good. Most of the beginning of the year diagnosis comes from the teacher's comments the previous year. This helps me to get into the reading program as soon as possible. The reading specialist also is helpful. Usually I have her come to the first class period and do the first assignment and I take it from there.

I always put the vocabulary words on the board and also on dittos. We would go over them orally and make sure they would be able to pronounce them all. Then I would ask them to write down the words they did not know and write a definition next to it. This would help them in reading the story to have a definition of the difficult words next to them. This usually took forty-five minutes, because the book

we used had many words that those children didn't know. They were very poor at vocabulary. The second day we usually read the story, and I would do it in three different ways. If it's a long story I would read it orally, because I feel that they just don't comprehend what's going on in a long story. If it's a shorter story, I ask them to read it themselves or I might break them up into groups of four and they read it together and have a list of questions to answer when they are finished reading. I usually spend five full days on a story. They get mixed up if I go faster with them. The third day I have comprehension questions that they must answer in complete sentences, which is very difficult for them at the beginning when they just don't understand the story. I give them two different grades. I give them a grade for answering the question correctly and then on the other side of the page there's a grade for the sentence writing. So I am looking for the right answer and also looking for them to be able to write in sentences. I ask about fifteen questions per story, and it takes an hour for them to complete the assignment. Some are easy and some are hard, and the ones that throw them the most are the ones that say, "What do you think?" This type of question still threw them at the end of the year. The fourth and fifth days are mixed up. We'll either have workbook activities, worksheets, creative writing, or some language activity that goes along with the story. I always try to have the comprehension and reading of the story in the same week. So we can read the story on Friday and do the comprehension questions on Monday.

This student would stare out the window, huffing and puffing and humming every ten minutes. I finally spoke to his mother about his behavior. He was acting like his older brother who dislikes school and

was also doing very poorly. He did improve by the end of the year.

Materials that I used to remedy this student's reading problems are not just directed to this student but to the whole class. We must use the basal text in our school, and when I use materials other than that I try to make it fun. I do a lot of language-oriented writing and reading with this class. I bring in a variety of types of books into the classroom every two weeks.

I don't find out anything about a child before school begins. I like to start with a student just walking into my classroom. I never go back and check what they have done before. I don't like someone to look back and say, "Oh, you did this last year and you did a poor job with it." I just like to have them come in, and I prefer to watch them grow. I use what's given to me. If tests are put in my mailbox, I will look at the scores and think about them, but very seldom do I use them. I can't think of any time that I really used a test score to determine where a student should be.

I felt very good about working with this student. I enjoyed working with him. It was a challenge at the beginning of the year. I feel that I'd rather be their friend than their teacher, and if I can be their friend, then I am their teacher. I myself feel I am more effective as their teacher if I'm their friend. Some people don't care to be that close to their students. If a person likes to be touched, then I hug them; I'd even joke with them if they'd let me. In the beginning of the year I am much more structured, and as the year goes along I get much more flexible. When the students get to know me, I'm able to tease them and they tease me. I'm not afraid to say that I can't go any further.

If I could start the year over again, I would have this student sitting close to my desk so that he wouldn't be so embarrassed being asked questions. I should have realized that when he came in and was too embarrassed to answer questions when he sat in the back of the room. I would find it much easier to put the ones that don't do as well right close to me so they're not embarrassed in front of their classmates.

The major source of help was the librarian. The reading consultant tests the students in the beginning and at the end of the year and I really didn't use those scores. Since I was trying to get away from the basal readers, the librarian was very helpful getting me books on different units. He was super getting me books for the lowest to the highest readers in my class.

I would love to see a large quantity of certain paperback books in my classroom, so I could read novels with small groups. This is not a very expensive project, but it's very difficult to talk the administration into this type of material. I am going to work on this during the summer.

The children helped me develop my conception of reading. The most influential thing was watching what was going on in my classroom. I remember being told during my first few years of teaching not to worry about having only one book because the children won't be able to read anyway. This made me angry, and I began looking for materials that the students could read. I think students can read, and I wanted to find them something that makes them feel good.

My role in teaching students is to provide them with as many different experiences with books as I can. I want them first to like

books. I don't like to point out to them how important reading is, that they'll have to read road signs, etc., because I think they really know that when they look at a road sign. I try to show them that I like books and that I make mistakes in reading. I'm very open about the mistakes that I make and tell them it is OK to make mistakes.

The most valuable part of my formal education was taking children's literature. I had an incredible teacher. My methods courses were the least valuable.

I would like to go back to school and take courses that I wasn't able to take and not worry about grades.

## Teacher Four: Second Interview

This group had problems with all the skills, workbook, vocabulary, and worksheets. All the directions had to be read to them and they really had a pretty hard time all through the year. Most of the time they had difficulty with comprehension questions. Workbook activities were almost impossible for them to do on their own.

I usually divide the students into groups of my own. I watched the work that they did at the beginning of the year. We have different worksheets that we work on, and I ask them to read orally to me and have a little conference with me. So I'm trying to test them to see what they can do by themselves and then try and place them into some type of group.

I'm really a bug on comprehension. I take long stories and condense them down to the main points of the story. I have them read these and then give them comprehension and vocabulary questions.

I think evaluation is an accumulative type of thing. It didn't seem very beneficial to me to test them at the beginning of the year and then again at the end to see if they improved on any of those skills. There is no way they can't improve some over the year. I really didn't go over the test results.

If I could do the year over again, I would involve the parents from the beginning of the year. It takes about six weeks to get to know these students, since only three of them are in my regular classroom. So that getting acquainted period takes a long time. I don't know any quick easy way to get to know the students.

I've taught all types of reading and I have no preference. I've

never had the highest reading group. I had fifteen low readers and those can be very frustrating at times, but I didn't dislike it. I have no preference. I shouldn't say it's easier to teach a higher reading group, because I think you have to do just as much planning, but it seems to be easier because they accept what you plan for them.

These three students are very unsure of themselves, and this student is very quiet and she barely speaks above a whisper and this student had a very hard family life and the parents pressured him into sports and they wanted him to do well in academics, but he is just an average student and the parents can't see that. Reading is hard for him. This student always reads books at a lower level than he is capable of reading. I didn't discourage that because I think he felt satisfied with this level because his reading group was difficult for him and I knew that. I didn't let him pick out a low second-grade book.

This student is really a problem, because she is so quiet. She's one of those who did minimum or average work. It was a student/teacher relationship where she did the work, turned it in, and you corrected it, but didn't really get close enough to the student. She very seldom smiles. This student has a lot of social problems. He was in the office quite often. His home life is bad and he was always seeking attention in other ways besides trying to do well academically. He is very intelligent, but tries to slide by. I wanted to give him lots of praise, but it was difficult because he didn't perform like he should. The other students rejected him because of his body odors.

This student wanted out of my class all year. She didn't think she belonged there. She thought she was better than the other students



in the class. She did belong in my room; she had a hard time reading orally, but she thought the book was too easy. She will only be an average student, and she hasn't been able to accept that being average is OK.

This student's mother worried unnecessarily. He was in the low reading group, but was doing fine. He was a slow deliberate type of worker and he didn't speed up for anything. He always waited for that perfect ball to go over the base. He needed self-assurance.

I like ability grouping for reading. I enjoy it; I think I do a better job when the students are grouped for reading. I know there are teachers who don't enjoy it. You always end up with someone in your home room you don't always get along with, and I enjoy not having that person there all the time, and I'm sure they enjoy not having to see me all the time. If they happen to fall in the same reading group and math group, then you're stuck and most of the time it's not the child, but the parent, who thinks perhaps I ask too much or not enough. I think I plan better when I have a particular ability group for reading. I think I force the students to do a better job.

### Analysis of Teacher Four

A poor attitude, along with a lack of vocabulary and comprehension skills are behaviors of students experiencing difficulties in reading. If these behaviors are present, a student will also have trouble reading directions and completing assignments.

The basal reading program was mandated in this school and all the students were reading in the same materials. Other materials that were used by this teacher included language experience activities and literature books. The major remediation technique used with students experiencing difficulties was having them spend time writing definitions of words. This was used during the year to increase the students' vocabulary.

This teacher is challenged by students who are experiencing difficulties. A diagnostic view of teaching in her mind needs to be very subjective in nature. Testing is secondary to her own observations and feelings. Her major focus with problem readers was to work on attitude while providing a warm and comfortable learning environment. Children's literature was the only valuable part of her teacher education program. Most of the specific methods courses were a waste of time and didn't give any insights into working with problem readers. This teacher feels her role is to help students enjoy books and want to read on their own.

Teacher Five Interview Data

## First Interview

This student has difficulty understanding words. Specifically, he has trouble with the whole area of comprehension. He does not look at the word as a whole and remember it the next time he sees it. I have noticed if a word starts in a certain way he cannot write it down the way he sees it. If the word starts with an st-blend he'll put it down as a k because to him the word begins with k rather than st. He seems to be improving. I really try to work with him on listening to beginning sounds. The comprehension part I think is coming. He has trouble with details and remembering them. Once he gets them in his mind he can remember them, so it's basically remembering to look for small details and to read for a purpose.

Our spelling books are phonetically based, so I used that at the beginning to help me identify this student's problems. I based my judgments by how he was doing in the basal series and also how well he was doing in social studies, because there is a lot of reading in social studies, along with comprehension questions to answer.

I spent twenty minutes a day with this group of thirteen. Some days he didn't do well on his study guide so I would have him read over the paragraphs that were assigned and answer the questions or fill in the blanks.

I wanted him to read through a story during reading time. He could either read it through orally or silently, depending on the difficulty of the material. We would then discuss it as we read it and I would have him do some kind of follow-up work on it afterwards, maybe

answer questions or do a workbook assignment.

I use the spelling book to remedy the reading problems. I had him listen for sounds at the beginning and ending of words. I also had him look for patterns in words. I used creative dramatics to help with comprehension. He is athletic, so I figured that dramatics would be the best way for him to remember things. I used a lot of things from nature.

In gathering information about his reading problems, I would want to be more specific on exactly what sounds were giving him problems. I would want to know what comprehension problems he was having. I would give him more practice in looking at details in his reading and help him answer some specific comprehension questions.

He's fun to work with. He is an intelligent student. If he could only learn to write down what he's thinking. He needs to think while writing.

If I could do the year over I would have him retested. I would also give him a specific test so I could find out where he is having difficulty, and then I would try and fit the skills group into the reading program. Last year I just couldn't fit that group into the schedule. There just wasn't enough time to work with these students on specific skills along with the basal series lessons.

The reading teacher has helped me. I had a couple of workbooks on phonics that I used quite a bit throughout the year as seat work. Also, there have been language and dramatics lessons that I have used with my students.

I would like to invite a lot of different people to come in and

talk to the students. That would be interesting to them and also would give them a chance to do research on different things and people. I would like to have enough money to try more learning center activities, try different things, and give students a little more variety.

My husband switched over to elementary education late in his career and I used some of the books that he was using in his course work. This helped give me a good idea of what reading is all about. It is such a complex process. I tried to diagnose a child and then give him material according to his ability.

I try to find out as much as I can about the students. I want to see if they have emotional problems, if they like sports, or are interested in learning about a specific area. Are they interested in creative dramatics? You have the students' interest when they get involved. I try and get an idea of how they are doing by looking at the test results, which areas are causing problems.

I feel my role is to try and take off as much emphasis in reading as I can. If they're really having problems in reading then I put the test on tape so they can listen to the test rather than having to read it or fill in the blanks without really understanding what they are reading. I would almost look upon it as teaching someone who has a handicap, because at this age level if they can't read, it really is a handicap, so you have to do something to help them so that their handicap doesn't totally frustrate them and they don't see any worth in themselves.

I think the most valuable classes are the classes where you are usually working with students and actually putting into action the things

that you are learning, actually making things that you want to use in your classroom. The least valuable I think is philosophy. It's nice to know what you're doing, but I think that as you teach you tend to develop your own philosophy, and so what other people think about education isn't really that important or practical.

I would have a hard time choosing what I would do if I had time off from teaching. When I did have time off, I tried to look into the learning disabilities area.

## Teacher Five: Second Interview

This group of fourth graders were working about on second-grade vocabulary. They seemed to understand what they were reading, but they really had trouble, particularly with sight vocabulary and phonetic concepts. I also had a tutor who worked with them individually three days a week.

I give the Informal Reading Inventory to find out if they had any specific problems and then put them into groups after listening to them read orally. We use the basal readers with all the students, but I use lots of games and other materials. I also had a phonetic series that I used which also had games along with it. Some of the stories in the basal readers are childish for some of the students, and I don't use them for that reason.

We use the Iowa Test at the beginning of the year and again at the end of the year. We are only going to use it at the end of the year from now on. This will help us group the students for the next year.

We are getting more materials to work with, but I'd almost push for more time. I don't think forty-five minutes per day is long enough for reading. You especially need more time with the slower students. I'd like to spend more time on listening skills, more time on talking about books.

I think it's much easier to see progress in a child when you have him in your room all day rather than having him in your room for forty-five minutes or an hour a day. It's hard to tell how they are doing in other areas and it's hard to see what they are reading in their free time. With this student in my own classroom I can see what he's

reading and get an idea of what his particular interests are so I can direct his reading all day and get him more involved.

I like working with the students who are having difficulty. It's a lot more difficult to try to figure out why they're having the problem they are, particularly when I don't have them all day long. Some of them are pretty obvious, like one student who is on medication. This student was never with it, always spaced out. He started to adjust, but then the doctor changed his medication and I think he regressed during the year. It just seems to me I would prefer having the students in my room all day long rather than having them separated, because I think it would be easier to note their progress and see where they're going. I find it difficult to relate to them in just a short period of time during the day.

Working with the students in the middle group I find that you need to spend a lot more time to motivate them and get them interested. Whereas the students in the low group are just struggling with the basics.

These two students are the types that you really have to work with in order to find out what they know. This one is in my room all the time and I had more of a feel for exactly what his limitations were. This student is very low in vocabulary, really low. He needs to work on vocabulary along with work on phonics. They all enjoy activity type things rather than just passively listening.

This student is excellent at listening skills and following directions. He has a terrific oral memory, but has great difficulty in remembering words. I've been told he has brain damage and from the



looks as if that's what I would guess. He can go over a group of words one day, but forget them the next day. It's difficult to get any test scores on him.

This student doesn't seem to be motivated at all. He seems to be able to whip through things quickly and didn't really care whether they were done well or not, so consequently he will have to do a lot of things over. I don't think it was a lack of ability, but a lack of interest in school. Perhaps if I had him in my room all the time I could have figured him out. I found it a difficult situation to work with him simply because I couldn't find out what was motivating him, if anything. He was fun to work with. He has a lot of interest in many areas, but has difficulty with writing skills.

My only contact with the other teachers was just before report card time. I would also talk with them about what certain students were doing in my room. I think this exchange is extremely helpful, but it didn't happen very often.

Analysis of Teacher Five

This teacher described the reading behaviors of problem readers centering specifically around comprehension weaknesses. Memory span and understanding the stories are major roadblocks to reading.

Specific techniques for helping these students took place in a group reading period. Spelling instruction, oral reading, and comprehension exercises were major instructional units. This teacher used the basal text with this ability group, along with worksheets and workbook activities. Creative dramatics was used to motivate the boys. This technique was described to help specifically with comprehension. The reading specialist was consulted to help gather materials for special lessons.

This teacher does not have a perspective of diagnostic teaching. She is at a point of trying to figure out what reading is all about and growing in her understanding of the complex role of helping the problem reader. She feels students with reading problems are handicapped, and she teaches them with this perspective in mind. She saw only the practical aspects of her teacher education background being helpful for her in the classroom

Diagnostic teaching may be easier to accomplish for this teacher if she was teaching in a self-contained classroom the entire day. She could then focus her instruction on a student's interests and direct reading all day.

Teacher Six Interview Data

## First Interview

This student has difficulty with sight vocabulary and sounding out words. His skills are so low that I have been reading to him so that I can find out what he is able to comprehend. I help him with his social studies and go over certain vocabulary words. Then I read the questions to make sure he understands what he is going. From what I can tell, this student is having difficulties with spelling, because he can't sound out words.

We use the Iowa Test at the beginning and end of the year, and we group for reading according to these scores. Also, we look at what reading series books a certain group will be using. This student spends an hour a day in reading class with another teacher.

This student's reading teacher goes through vocabulary words and comprehension questions in the reading book. She spends a lot of time with recall questions. Sequencing seems to be a real problem. So each lesson involves the story, vocabulary words, answering questions, and doing supplementary activities. This is as individualized as she gets with the students. This student sees the reading specialist four times a week.

I would like to know how he is doing in comprehension. Can he recall facts and sequence facts that he is given? How many vocabulary words does he know? I do get the results back from the Iowa Test and he is also being tested by the reading specialist. We also must work with the assessment tests. We give post tests in order to see how much growth has taken place. These tests get down to specific objectives

rather than just the vocabulary and comprehension sections of the Iowa Test.

This student is in my room all day except for reading. I really enjoy working with this type of child. It really doesn't matter to me, except it's much easier to work with the students who are on reading level because they're able to read directions by themselves. I have to do study guides with the students in the lower reading level. I have to spend a lot of time knowing what words to use and help them with the questions. It's very difficult for them.

This question is difficult to answer. If I could start the year over, I don't think I would do anything any differently. I guess this summer I will be forced to research and find out how to help students who are experiencing difficulties. I will be teaching a whole class of low readers next year. I've never worked with the low readers before.

With a class of twenty-five students, it is very difficult to individualize instruction. This student gets more help when he goes to the reading specialist than I could give him if he stayed with me. He is getting more individual help by going out of the room, because there would be lots of times that I couldn't give him the individual attention that he needs. So I feel more competent, efficient, and successful when he gets special help than having him stay with me all day.

The reading specialist was the most help, because she worked with this student on a one-to-one basis. I don't have many resources in my room to work with the low readers. I just kind of make adjustments for these readers.

I wish I could see what materials are available for the low readers that are on their interest level. Part of the reason that the students don't get involved is that the stories are really boring. They are also a little childish, especially for the children who think they're hot stuff and then they have to read about Fuzzy Rabbit. It's a little bit of a blow to their ego. I would like to see more magazines and learning centers where the students can read about the kinds of things that interest them. I really don't think I would be able to order the materials because I don't know what is available and I haven't worked with a lot of those materials.

One of my reading methods classes introduced me to the concept of diagnostic teaching. We have a reading specialist in our school. So I don't spend my time diagnosing reading problems. I look for some problems in my reading classes, but I also expect the other teachers to know what's going on in their reading classes.

Our school system has gone along with one basal series. It doesn't cover much as far as comprehension and sequencing and different kinds of thought processes are concerned. Comprehension is something I'm looking for more than anything else, and of course vocabulary is part of the comprehension process.

My role in teaching reading is not as definite as the teachers who are working with the bottom two reading groups. Next year I will be much more responsible for those students. I teach an individualized program, and when I am working on a specific subject with the entire class I go over the things in the book and read the questions so the students with reading problems can get the idea of what everyone else is reading.

Student teaching was probably the most valuable experience for me because you get out and work with students and teachers and the entire school system. Some of my methods courses were totally irrelevant. They were just a waste of my time and I think part of that was who was teaching the methods class.

If I could take time off for learning I would spend my time in environmental education. I'd also want to spend time looking at other teachers, see how they handle different things. I would like to gather ideas from other teachers and see how they teach a particular subject. I would like to sort out things for myself and organize myself. I tend to jump around a little bit in some of the areas.

## Teacher Six: Second Interview

The students in the low group had a lot of difficulty putting their thoughts down on paper. They also had trouble answering two- and three-part questions. I had to practically break this kid's arm to get him to write in complete sentences. These students also had a bad attitude. The biggest problem with these low students was the written work and the study skills more than the reading. This student was immature. I gave vocabulary tests and these students did the vocabular work but didn't think about it, so when it came time for the test they said, "I've never seen that word before."

If I could do the year over again I would have more supplementary things for the top group. For the low group I'd have maybe some more vocabulary work for them, because they didn't seem to get it the first time around. I don't know if I would put any of these kids in different books; they seem to be all around the same reading level. I wanted to keep all of them together since they were the top group, and when I lecture I can involve the whole group. It works out a lot better. It's not like one group on one story and the other group on another story.

We give the Iowa Test in the fall and in the spring, and I was really pleased with the growth in vocabulary and comprehension.

I think I could run an individualized program with these students. I could send them out of the room for special projects, and they would manage to get it done. I didn't do it because we did many things as a group. At times we would get away from the basal text for two and three weeks. For me it was comfortable and also for the

students because they would be involved in a variety of projects.

This student had some serious emotional problems at the beginning of the year and told me that he had already read the entire book and did everything there was to do with that book. It was very difficult to get him to do any work.

This student had a real problem with her attitude about reading. She hated reading and everything about it. I think she used this technique for an attention getter. It was tough for her, but I think she really is a good reader and if she took the time she could get her work finished and it would turn out correct. She was a bit of a problem because when you keep hearing, "Oh, I hate reading. I hate everything about it; it's too hard," and you know it's only for attention, you begin to lose patience with this type of student.

This student also had difficulty reading and part of her problem was she also hated reading. She would always have this sort of blank look on her face. I tried talking with her a couple of times. It was still this blankness and when it came time for parent conferences I asked her teacher to talk with the parents about the things she was reading. She was really doing crummy work for the group she was in, and it appeared that she really wasn't putting in any effort. I found out that she was afraid of me, afraid of everything that I did. So after we straightened things out, it wasn't so much of a problem.

I'm going to have to change my teaching style when I work with this low group. I will have three groups next year, and that will be a challenge. I've never had more than two groups, and going from the high to the low group will be an adjustment. I enjoy working with the



high group because I can do all kinds of crazy things and we can get into some discussions where I could be more myself with sarcasm and dry humor and that sort of thing. With the low group I'm afraid they would take everything I say literally and there would be a tremendous discipline problem.

With three groups I'm going to have to schedule my time. It will be difficult trying to figure out how to get around to all these groups and get them going. I would like to figure out some sort of schedule so that I'll be working with the whole group, then small groups, and still have time for individuals.

Analysis of Teacher Six

This teacher views the reading problems of students to be so extreme that she must read the material orally so that they can function in the content areas and understand all areas of the curriculum. Inability to spell and lack of word recognition strategies are also poorly developed areas with students experiencing reading difficulties.

Each reading lesson must include all of the activities listed in the teachers' guide of the basal reading program. This teacher used the reading specialist to work with problem readers and felt that very little progress would have been made with these students if she would not have had a reading specialist in the school. Most of the help given these students centered around word recognition activities, since they were at the beginning reading process.

The students experiencing difficulties in reading are not the easiest type of student for this teacher to have in her classroom. She does not have a developed perspective of diagnostic teaching, and views the reading specialist as the person qualified to work with problem readers on an individual basis. The basal reading series was used with the entire class and lacked specific help in comprehension. This teacher does not view her role as being the person qualified to teach problem readers. Teacher education methods classes did not help this teacher understand the problem reader or give suggestions on particular remediation procedures. This teacher lacks organization skills and feels inadequate in working with problem readers.

Teacher Seven Interview Data

## First Interview

I would have difficulty diagnosing this student's reading problems because I don't have him in my reading class. He leaves my room for sixty minutes each day for reading. He does have difficulty with consonant and vowel sounds and can't put words together so that they make sense. It's hard for him to pronounce the words. The reading teacher did give him a test at the beginning and end of the year to see if we could notice any progress or changes in his reading performance. In his regular classes this student has a real problem in reading a sentence in his books and also in being able to write answers to comprehension questions. He is getting better in forming sentences. At the beginning of the year he couldn't write because his motor skills were poor. He has a real problem in spelling. I stand over him a lot during spelling tests and say the word again just for him and sometimes he can get it right.

This student is in a small reading class and I know the teacher has been really discouraged about his progress. We didn't find out much information from the Assessment Test.

I don't really know how to measure this student's achievement. He has such a hard time even sounding out words.

This student is really nice to work with. He will work real hard for short periods of time.

I'm not sure what I would do if I could start the year over. If I knew then what I know now I think maybe I might be a little harder on him. I think a lot of teachers tend, if a child is having

difficulty, to want to make him feel comfortable and not uneasy or uptight. We say, "Don't worry, you will get it." This student does not have any support from home, so everything must be done in school. You can't depend on any person that will help him at home.

Our reading consultant and librarian are very helpful in gathering materials for us to use in special projects. So many of the new materials are unfamiliar to me. I'm an old teacher and I'm very unfamiliar with the new kits and things that are available nowadays. It's all a whole new world to me. I would like to see learning centers where students can get excited and turned on about some aspect of learning so that I could work with a smaller group by myself without being distracted by other students. I'm incapable of setting up this type of center because I'm not knowledgeable enough to do this type of thing. When I first started teaching, you had three reading groups within your own classroom. If the students didn't fit, you made them. You spent most of the reading time giving them extra activities, ditto sheets, or blackboard assignments. This is a very sterile way of teaching. The students were more disciplined in those days, and I think maybe you could get by with it years ago. Today the students are not that turned on or disciplined any more.

I like to teach a group of students who are on one level because you can have them doing so many more things together. There are still some students that really don't get too excited about reading or doing any work and I think if you have them in one group you could get more into things with feelings and characters in the stories. When you have reading groups you just get into worksheets with vowels, etc., and you're busy doing just the basic things.

I would like to have more time to gain information about different things that would help me teach the student experiencing difficulty. I wouldn't want to see too many things; it would confuse me. Maybe three learning centers where students could go and work on some special project. In these centers they would have a choice of things they would like to do, while I would have time to listen to children read or ask them questions. My room does not have enough space to set up learning centers. I'm always surprised with this age level that the students can't express themselves on paper. They are terrible writers. Verbally, they can come up with some great things.

Next year I will have the low group. I've had good readers for four or five years and have become familiar with the books and materials. Now I will have to plan a little bit better next year.

I don't think I'm very diagnostic. I really think my diagnostic understanding is probably pretty poor. I can tell if they have a problem but I don't know how to pinpoint it to a specific area of difficulty. In a reading diagnosis course it was brought to my attention that the physical aspects of vision and hearing could cause reading problems. When you consider all the things that could go wrong, it's a wonder that anybody can read. I also was told not to worry about boys. Boys sometimes aren't ready to learn to read until eight or nine, and here we try to shove them into the reading program at six or seven and they really are not ready. So I tend not to worry too much about boys. I have one student who is starting to get it together. I think he'll be all right. He's always been in a real slow reading group and he thinks he can't read very well.

After so many years of teaching you've got to put a few things together. If you don't, you might as well give up. Years ago they did not test students, and I've never been in a system where they retain students. I've always gone along with the theory that you do more damage mentally and socially if you make them go over the same material again. I think there should be programs for those students with special learning needs. A lot of times it's not what you do, it's the way you do it. It is always good to get parents in on helping you make the decision about a student's learning difficulty.

I relied on the guidance of the reading specialist. She gives the reading tests at the beginning of the year and usually pinpoints what the difficulties might be. She then suggests the materials to use and then if I see anything in the store that may be fun, I will buy it. The students this year all had problems in comprehension, so I just gave them comprehension materials all year.

My role in teaching students who are experiencing difficulty in reading is maybe to point to the problems that they are having. I try and give them exactly the things that will help improve the difficult areas--the spelling, the writing, and all of the things that go hand and hand with reading.

My student teaching experience was terrible. It was in a kindergarten room with six or seven other student teachers. The most valuable part of my education was when I started teaching. I really had an excellent principal. She would come into my classroom and demonstrate how to teach a reading class. She showed me how she would handle different problems and her approach to reading, which was very valuable.

I would like to take a course that would show different materials and approaches to reading. I'm too close to retirement to do many more things.

## Teacher Seven: Second Interview

These students were in the slow group that read from a much easier book. They all needed help with comprehension skills. They were all really good workers.

I'm not really sure how I grouped these students. These students were very vocal, so you could tell just from their answers that they were really good. These were more quiet and I had to encourage them to respond. All of them did well on the end-of-the-year test except two girls who seemed to really freeze on tests.

I used a different basal text with the top group because I didn't feel my low group was strong enough to handle the same material as the top group. The series I chose had an excellent workbook and I am more familiar with the book as I had been through it a couple of times, so I decided to use that rather than the regular basal text the school adopted. They will keep these children in this series next year, as they are all in the same reading book.

I think I would do the same thing over again next year.

I think they were put in a good reading book. I'm not too sure that I'd like to have another year with only five students in a slower group. Having five students all by themselves wasn't very successful, because what you tend to do is neglect the five rather than the twenty-five that you have in the larger group. With only the five students you just don't give them enough time.

It's not too bad working with the students that are having difficulty. They were anxious and eager to do well, and they were willing to work hard.



Analysis of Teacher Seven

Pronouncing words and writing answers to comprehension questions were the main behaviors of students experiencing reading problems. Parents and home background must be positive in order for students to gain confidence in reading.

This teacher built her remediation program around small group instruction with a focus on weaknesses. Time was not available for individual help and all students read out of the same basal reader. The reading specialist and librarian helped this teacher gather materials for special projects that may motivate the problem reader.

This teacher views the teaching of reading from a total class perspective. Grouping students for special help is frustrating for the teacher. It is easier for this teacher to motivate a problem reader when students are in a group of motivated, eager readers. This teacher does not have a diagnostic view of teaching. She does know when problems exist, but does not have the reading knowledge background to pinpoint the difficulty or remediation technique. Many years of teaching experience have helped this teacher develop a teaching perspective. The most valuable educational experience was during her beginning years of teaching when the principal took the time to come into her classroom and model the teaching of reading.

Teacher Eight Interview Data

## First Interview

This boy is slow in almost everything. He's ten years old and needs a great deal of help with decoding skills. I think the reading teacher needs to work with him.

I really didn't give him any tests at the beginning of the year to diagnose his problems.

This student is in a group with three other little girls and I spend more time with this lower group than with the other group. I spend about thirty minutes a day with these four low students. I use the basal text with them and we stick pretty close to the reading manual. I do use some reading games with them and also assign a book every Friday. These students have difficulty finding something they really like, that they are capable of reading and enjoying. I always like to get an idea of what book they are going to report on before Friday.

I used flash cards and reading blocks with this student. I really didn't do anything to specifically help him with his reading problem.

I went by the testing the reading teacher did in the fall and spring. She gives the tests and gives us the results. I did keep a record of things he had done. The tests let you know where this student is in relation to the rest of the group and this isn't very helpful for working on this student's specific problems.

I do think I raised his self-confidence this year. I'm not altogether sure how much teaching of reading we accomplished. I do think he felt more like he was able to read at the end of the year. He was

self-confident about approaching reading, and I hope it continues into next year. He came into the room feeling he was a failure and hated all teachers. I have a collection of books and tapes and he really enjoyed those. I think it gave him more self-confidence that he could read books in a relaxed manner.

I'm hoping that these new tests in the beginning of the year will give us more specific information so we can find out the areas in which the students need help. With this information I may do things differently if I could do the year over again. The reading teacher and speech teacher were both very helpful.

I would like to do more testing with this student myself. I really didn't know what to do with this student. I did use different types of word games and things like that to stimulate his interest. I suppose some type of teaching machine may be helpful with this type of student, but I'm not very familiar with those machines.

Reading journals helps influence my conception of diagnostic teaching. I do generally read them, but I haven't recently. The basal text is the only approach that I've used in the last ten years. I'm very familiar with this series, as it has been in the school system for eight years.

My role in the teaching of the students who are experiencing difficulty in reading is to work on self-concept. I really worked on making this student feel better about himself. I think this has a lot to do with reading and everything else. I spend more time with this type of student simply because they need it more than the ones who are good in reading.

I had an excellent student teaching experience. I started teaching before I received my degree and I had a chance to take courses after having my own class. The classes that I took before I taught full time were a waste of time. The classes take on a different perspective after student teaching and also after having your own classroom.

I would like to learn more about diagnostic teaching and would like to take course work in this area at the university.

I'm the only teacher in the school that does not ability group for reading. I really didn't know what the reading teacher was doing with some of my students. I would always have to go to her and there wasn't enough time to talk about specific things she was doing.

I really feel weak in the testing area. I'm not sure I give students what they need because I don't know how to diagnose.

## Teacher Eight: Second Interview

I had an exceptional group of students this year. I found that they enjoyed reading much more after I talked the principal into letting me keep my students for reading. I didn't have any moans and groans about reading like before when the students would go to someone else for the reading period. I enjoyed having the entire class for 'reading because we could do more fun-type things and wouldn't have to stop what we were doing because the time was up.

I had three reading groups and they were placed in the same group they were in last year. I also took a look at the test results and sometimes I would move a child. One child moved into the school district in the fall and she tested very low and was reading in another series, so we had no idea of where to place her. So I put her in the average group. She performed just on an average basis and didn't do any better than anyone else in the group and in some cases didn't do as well. She was kind of a plain student and just did what you expected of her and didn't go beyond. Her parents were interested in her and they came in to see me during report card time. Her brother had received all exceptional progress grades and she didn't have any. I don't believe at the beginning of the year students should receive exceptional grades. The parents had been told at the previous school that she tested very high. They also told me that she would work up to whatever I challenged her with. So I moved her up a group and she did an excellent job. If it hadn't been for the parents I might not have done that. I wish more parents would help teachers out.

The students in the low group all needed work on vowels and beginning consonants. They couldn't remember their new words.

I didn't use any specific tests, mostly observation and assignments in the book or reading series. I really stuck pretty much to the basal text. We used a lot of other books which were in my own library. I used word games and block type activities and things that were more manipulative.

I'm sure there are probably things to help these students, but I don't know really what to do. We have so little funds to spend for materials that you just don't even look into it. I think I would if we had the money to spend on special materials.

This is a difficult question for me to answer because I enjoy working with all the students. You get satisfaction working with the top student, but I can't say I really enjoyed it. I enjoyed the challenge with the lower students. The top group did some nice things on their own, plays, etc., and it is satisfying to see the progress they can make. This is difficult for me to answer. I enjoy working with them all.

We gave the Gates Test in the spring, and it was very interesting to see the progress. My class made better progress than any of the other third grades in reading. That's about the only way I measure growth, other than what I can observe for myself. This student at the beginning of the year didn't think he could do anything. I think that was most of the problem. He wasn't doing his workbook pages or his worksheets. It was just hit or miss and he would put anything down just to get finished. At the end of the year he was really pleased with what he had accomplished. He really had gained his self-confidence and I hope it continues. I'm going to worry about it next year if he doesn't continue this progress.

Analysis of Teacher Eight

This teacher views the behavior of problem readers to be slow in everything. Decoding skills are extremely low and lack of self-confidence compounds the problem.

Diagnostic techniques are incorporated into the regular teaching sessions and involve working with a basal reader. Games and library books were used as supplementary materials to motivate the problem reader. Tapes were also used to provide the problem reader with a feeling of success. The reading specialist worked with some of the problem readers on a limited time schedule and she also helped this teacher with interesting materials that would motivate students.

This teacher has a very limited understanding of diagnostic teaching and the basal reader has been her guide for many years. She feels that her major role is to work on building a student's self-concept. When a student feels better about himself you can begin to examine the reading problems more closely. This teacher runs a self-contained classroom and is eager to expand her knowledge about diagnostic teaching.

Teacher Nine Interview Data

## First Interview

This student is a very low reader and just couldn't seem to remember the basic word lists. She guessed a lot.

The school uses the Gates Reading Test, and she was also given other tests by the reading teacher. I don't know what they were. I worked with her about a half hour a day.

This student was in a group with two other girls. During the lesson we would go through the new vocabulary and read stories together. Sometimes we would review phonics skills that were needed for the lesson and use the new vocabulary in sentences of their own. They would write these original sentences and put the words in alphabetical order. This student would also work on special worksheets and workbook pages.

The only materials that I used to help this student was the work in the basal text, a few lessons from reading kits, and spelling books.

I wish I would have known in the fall of the year what she was able to do and what were her specific problems. When I found out, I really didn't know how to help her. It was all very confusing. At times I didn't know if she was putting me on or if she was working up to potential. I would have liked some background information on her. What was her life like? What were her problems in the past?

Some days I felt like I had accomplished a lot and some days I didn't really know. She did a lot better on her final test, but I had a feeling she guessed.

One thing I would like to do differently is spend more time with her. I would like to have her in my own room all day rather than have



her just come in with the other students for a few hours a day. I just didn't have enough time to spend with her alone. If I had her in my room all day we could have gone over other reading materials. We had reading the first thing in the morning and sometimes when she was in here she just wasn't in the mood for settling down to reading. Some days she just wanted to talk about what had happened at home. If she was here all day I could teach her what she should be learning in reading during my free time and help her select materials she would like to read from the library and extra things like that.

I would talk with the reading teacher and find out what she was doing so I wasn't working in the opposite direction. Also I tried working with the home room teacher.

I would like to have more materials in my room. We need an update on reading kits, basal materials, games, etc.

I think my conception is changing because of an individualized program that I saw in action. Right now I'm getting different ideas on it because I just don't like the basal program. I just follow the teacher's manual all the time and it gets kind of boring for the students and for me. I'd like to try something different and it seems as if I could concentrate on the different skills then the students wouldn't feel like they're always in the lower group.

We don't really have a set curriculum guide for reading. They give tests in fall and spring to find the students' reading level. My role is to find things that they are interested in so they'll want to learn to read. I'd almost have to be a friend to them and show them that reading is hard and they should take it gradually. I want to get

them interested in what is available at their reading level instead of having them become frustrated with something that was difficult and above their ability.

The most valuable part of my education was having the experiences in a classroom rather than just sitting and listening to somebody tell us how it's supposed to be. Actually observing what was going on was really helpful. The least valuable would be listening to lectures about how things are supposed to be.

I would like time off to visit different classrooms that were working with different approaches. I would also like to volunteer to work in those programs for a period of time.

## Teacher Nine: Second Interview

I have four reading groups and with the lowest groups I would sometimes use another book that everybody would read out of together for informational purposes. We did this sometimes once a week, hoping that the lower students wouldn't think they were really the low group because the other students would listen to them read.

You really must get to know and care about those students in the lower group. I really ought to dig a little deeper and learn how to teach this type of student. Most of the time it is by trial and error.

I wish there was a way to teach some students how to read. This child is not dull at all but he is in the lowest reading group and he doesn't care. What can be done for a student like that?

I really feel that if you can't read you can't do anything else. Reading comes before mathematics. You can't hold a student back forever.

I would like to take a closer look at materials, especially testing materials and find out exactly what kind of information this test or that test will provide.

I also would like to find out exactly what skills I should be teaching at each level, so I could branch away from the basal test and use books that interest the student that is having difficulty learning to read. Getting students motivated is my biggest challenge.

This student is a very slow reader. He has no sense if there is any relationship between a sound and written symbol. It takes him so long to read and figure out the words that he loses the meaning. By the time he gets through the third sentence of a paragraph he has no idea of what he is reading. His vocabulary is very limited. He really does have problems.

Analysis of Teacher Nine

This teacher views the reading behavior of students experiencing difficulties in reading to be those areas that involve comprehension and making sense of language. Students guess their way through the material and don't have any specific word analysis skills.

Most of the remediation time was in a group setting using the basal text, reading kits, and spelling books. The reading specialist provided assistance to students who were experiencing difficulties in reading. Teaching reading by ability group left this teacher with limited extra time to work on reading problems outside of the time set aside for reading each day.

Most of the background knowledge about the reading process was obtained from many years of teaching with the basal text. She is frustrated with a student who is experiencing difficulty and does not know which direction to turn for help. Her role perspective involves finding ways to motivate students by providing interesting books at the student's reading level. This teacher would like to individualize the reading program in her classroom and maintain a self-contained classroom for reading. She feels that having students in your classroom the entire day lends itself to developing a perspective of diagnostic teaching. This growth and change for this teacher would allow her to look more closely at the students who are having trouble.

Teacher Ten Interview Data

## First Interview

This student's difficulty is in motivation and lack of interest in reading. He is very impatient about sounding out words or taking time to look them up in the dictionary. He also has a hard time focusing on a group type of instruction. He doesn't really seem to care if he can pronounce the words or not.

The only materials that I've used to diagnose his problem was oral class work. I used phonics activities, syllable work, and vocabulary meanings with him. So, basically, I just used the different oral reading activities and the ditto assignments to diagnose his problems. The reading teacher did test him and found him reading below grade level. He doesn't have a big handicap in reading other than just a lack of interest. This student gets forty-five minutes a day of direct teaching with me.

I really have to sit on him a lot. Some days he would settle down and read the story and take part. I have many in my class that have to be motivated and that's why I stress a lot of class-type activities. He has his ups and downs. He will participate; it's just a matter of how hard he tries. The only way I was able to improve reading as far as attitude and interest were concerned was to try and be creative with the activities and oral work. I feel that it is much more exciting for the students if the teacher holds a class discussion about syllables or phonics skills than it is to hand out a ditto and let each student work alone. I would read a story and then try to relate that situation about the character into the student's daily life.

We get off on tangents, but I had to do that in order to keep their interest. I don't have any special remedial materials. During the year these students do different units, different kinds of projects. I keep them busy with projects, like one or two days a week they paint or draw their ideas; they get up in front of their peers and give oral book reports and dress up like characters. I have different projects going all the time so they don't get bored.

I grade them on all their projects. I like to have information in all areas, oral or written, book reports, projects, phonics, comprehension, vocabulary, and oral participation.

I really feel comfortable with this student. I really had to work hard this year with my whole class, but it's the kind of thing where I kept on plugging away. I think the best thing about this class is they were very co-operative. They may not have picked reading as their favorite subject if I handed out a questionnaire, but they were very co-operative and I didn't have many discipline problems even though they weren't crazy about reading.

If I could start the year over I'd like to find out what the interests of those students were, like hobbies, subject matter, fairy tales, etc. This may help me figure out what to do with them if I had known more of their hobbies and interests.

I really didn't rely on any resources other than my basal reader and different ideas that I got from here and there. The librarian would come down to my room several times to present talks about certain books. She would bring along samples and the students were forced to make a choice right away. This helped with some of my students who just wander

around and really don't have any motivation to actually go and check out a book.

I'm really not too familiar with a lot of different kinds of reading materials on reading instruction. I would need to go to the reading teacher and ask her opinion and do a lot of research before I would know what to do with my money, time, and materials. Right now I feel I am using materials that we have to the fullest extent.

I really don't have any problems diagnosing my students. I really feel I know each one individually and I could sit down and make a list of strengths and weaknesses of each child in my room. I got this conception from teaching kids and writing objectives for my teaching plans. These objectives were from a combination of what the school has set up and also some from the teachers' guide. The main thing I work from is our school objectives, which include comprehension, vocabulary, and phonics. These different things we've set up as our goals.

I think in reading it's sometimes hard to motivate the child. I think my guiding principle is to try and interest the child, but also I believe in the discipline part of reading. A child may not appreciate it, but I believe in making a child do it. I think some kids really don't care and so a guiding principle may be to have them read.

I saw my role as stimulating a child, helping him, trying to get him organized so he's able to do certain objectives in reading. Some students are really spaced out and have difficulty in reading just because they can't keep their mind on what they are reading. I think it's my responsibility and role to help these students try to

organize their thinking. I try to do that with oral discussions where I pin them down so they must give some sort of answer. I'm there to teach reading.

I went to a private college and I think the most valuable part of my training in reading and other subject matter was what I experienced in interaction between my instructors. I received many ideas because we shared a lot of our ideas. I really try to involve my students in sharing, because I was involved in my educational experience and I really feel it works. I also feel you remember it longer. You can help a student who is bored, get him talking and interested and then he will want to learn. I also just loved my instructors because I knew them on a first-name basis. They knew me and I wasn't just a number, and therefore my interest was increased because they knew me. I kind of guess my overall training was a big influence on my philosophy of education, especially for the children who are slower. If you take an interest in them that really makes a difference. Give them positive reinforcement, that's what these students need.

I would like to learn about individualization and learning centers. I'm not really sold on it, but I want to learn more about these approaches. Visiting schools that have these programs would be an excellent way for me to learn about these different programs.



## Teacher Ten: Second Interview

There are quite a few students in this low average class that are hard to motivate. I have five in the low group that are very slow.

I really enjoy working with the low students; it's the kind of thing that you just keep plugging away. I kept all the students in one group because they are really all pretty much on one level.

In other subject areas, I help the slow students with vocabulary and comprehension questions. I feel that I teach reading in all subject areas. I put some reading material on tapes, work with small groups, and sometimes individuals, but the main effort is put into group lessons. I have a high school aide that also comes in and sometimes works with small groups, but most of the time she does correcting of papers and workbooks. If somebody missed a spelling test, she'll work with them because I can't help them all individually since they are also having difficulty with writing. This student is very quiet and does not comprehend what she reads. She does seem to be able to recreate the patterns as far as spelling goes. It's hard to really get to know her because I don't have her all day.

I would help her with the social studies study guide; that would tell me how she was comprehending the material. I really don't take time during the regular class time to work with her. She is very quiet and it's hard to work with her. I think a big part of my role is to spend time in drawing her out so I can understand what is the bigger problem. She has a tendency to drift off; she isn't really with me.

You really have to treat each one differently. They don't always respond the way you think to the same type of instruction.

Analysis of Teacher Ten

Motivation and lack of interest in reading were the behaviors that cause the greatest difficulty for students experiencing difficulties in reading.

In order to accomplish the motivation problem this teacher works hard in many areas of reading. She developed her perspective of teaching reading as she became acquainted with individual students and their problems. Her main goals were oral work and creative projects. She plans carefully, writes objectives, and sets realistic goals. Part of the teaching time is spent helping students organize their thinking. If she can accomplish this with students then she feels they will apply thinking processes to other areas of study and their personal life. Her role in the classroom is to teach reading and she tries hard to accomplish her objectives. She views the reading specialist as a person to administer tests and make recommendations.

This teacher is frustrated with motivating students. The most important influence upon the development of her role perspective was the excellent teacher education program. This background helped her develop a philosophy of education and gave her an understanding of problem readers. Getting to know her professors on an individual level and being able to learn in small class settings influenced the outlook she has for students with reading difficulties.

## CHAPTER V

### CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

#### Conclusions

This study was designed to describe and explore classroom teachers' perspectives of students experiencing difficulties in reading. The beliefs of these teachers provide evidence for recognizing their perspective as one of placing confidence in school mandated reading programs to accomplish their goals of helping problem readers achieve competence and satisfaction in reading. The exploratory questions that were used in this study can clarify some of the findings for the reader. The questions were:

1. What elements constitute these classroom teachers' perspectives of students experiencing difficulties in reading?
2. What are the assumptions these teachers make about the students that support their perspective?
3. Which variables influence the teachers' perspectives of their role in diagnosing and teaching students experiencing difficulties in reading?
4. How do these teachers synthesize the skills of diagnostic teaching into their perspective?

Question One: What elements constitute these classroom teachers' perspectives of students experiencing difficulties in reading?

The following elements seem to indicate these classroom teachers'

perspectives: first, knowledge of diagnostic teaching as it relates to the students' needs and abilities; second, content developed around available materials; third, allocating time to interact with problem readers most efficiently; fourth, planning the reading period for effective teaching; fifth, displaying a personalized attitude in relating to the problem reader.

#### Knowledge of Diagnostic Teaching as It Relates to the Students' Needs and Abilities

In this element, diagnosis was seen apart from their role and related in most instances to the testing program that was a part of the school's testing program. These tests were administered to the entire school population in the fall and spring of the school year, and in all cases was an achievement test covering more than just reading content. "The school gives an achievement test and that's the only type of evaluation that was given to the entire class." (Teacher Eight--Phase One.) "The Iowa Test of Basic Skills was given at the beginning of the year, but we don't see the results until much later, so it doesn't do much good." (Teacher Four--Phase Two.) These teachers want instant help. Testing to them is just accumulating more evidence that merely confirms what they already know--some pupils can't read. Also, the measures that were used were such as to yield the most information in the least time and be of such a nature as can be administered and interpreted with a moderate amount of training. In many cases this role was left in the hands of the school's reading teacher or diagnostician. Results of tests were not shared with the teachers, and they were frustrated in the area of specific recommendations. "I didn't give any formal test

or anything, except have him read the Dolch list at the beginning of the year." (Teacher Four--Phase One.) "The reading teacher did all of the formal testing. Most tests are really a pain in the neck." (Teacher Six--Phase One.) "I didn't use any specific materials to diagnose his problems. The reading diagnostician gave him a series of tests, and I didn't receive the results." (Teacher Nine--Phase One.) "We have a reading specialist in our school. I don't spend my time diagnosing reading problems." (Teacher Six--Phase Two.) "I didn't do any specific diagnostic testing with my students. My plan of attack was on a day-to-day basis." (Teacher Four--Phase One.)

Diagnosis was perceived in a formal sense, and a perspective of daily informal diagnosis was seldom described within the framework of looking for individual problems. "I don't do any kind of formal testing; it was mostly just subjective, based on the fact that they finished the book. (Teacher Seven--Phase One.) "Sometimes I know a student is having difficulty by looking at his face." (Teacher Eight--Phase One.) "I am really weak in the testing area. I'm not sure I give the students what they need, because I didn't know how to diagnose." (Teacher Seven--Phase Two.)

One teacher described the professional judgment that she used in an effort to meet individual needs. She knows the environment from which the students come and its general effect on the educational achievements of the students. "I really don't have any problems diagnosing my students. I really feel I know each one individually, and I could sit down and make a list of strengths and weaknesses of each child in my room. I got this diagnostic view from teaching students and writing objectives that I plan

for teaching. These objectives were from a combination of what the school has set up and also from the teachers' guides." (Teacher Ten--Phase Two.) This teacher also goes on to describe the educational background that influenced the way she looks at children. "I went to a private university and I think the most valuable part of my education in reading was the interaction I experienced with my instructors. I just loved my instructors because I knew them on a first-name basis. They knew me and I wasn't just a number, and therefore my interest was increased because they knew me. My overall training was a big influence on my philosophy of education, especially for the children who are slow. If you take an interest in them that really makes a difference." (Teacher Ten--Phase Two.)

In describing the specific reading problems of the students experiencing difficulties in reading, these teachers' descriptions related in many instances to the affective domain. "He doesn't like to read." (Teacher Two--Phase One.) "His attitude is really poor." (Teacher Four--Phase Two.) "She has no interest in reading." (Teacher One--Phase One.) "Brings little experiential background to the printed page." (Teacher Two--Phase Two.) "It's like pulling teeth to get her to even try." (Teacher Five--Phase One.) These classroom teachers mentioned a variety of intangibles, such as feelings, emotions, attitudes, interests, appreciations, valuing, and other methods of adjustment. In proposing a means to remedy these students' problems, the corrective procedures mentioned were more appropriate for the cognitive domain. "I'm going to reteach all of the phonetic skills so that he will be able to unlock new words on his own." (Teacher Four--Phase One.) "I'm going to start with

the simplest of comprehension skills and provide her with daily drill until she improves her ability to understand what she reads." (Teacher Six--Phase Two.) "I'm going to have her learn five new words every day so that she will expand her vocabulary." (Teacher Eight--Phase Two.) "I will assign more worksheets in comprehension." (Teacher One--Phase Two.)

In most cases the teaching remedies related to the thinking processes, such as knowing, comprehending, applying, analyzing, and synthesizing. For these classroom teachers the principles underlying the skills of diagnostic teaching seem to be lost sight of in looking for "all or nothing" answers in how to best teach the students experiencing difficulties in reading.

#### Content Developed around Available Materials

The next element of these teachers' perspectives focused upon the reading program that was mandated by the school curriculum. The mandated program in most instances involved a basal text. "We must use the basal text in our school." (Teacher Four--Phase Two.) "The basal text is the only approach that I've used in the last ten years." (Teacher Eight--Phase Two.) "The reading program in my school does not allow me to use other materials." (Teacher One--Phase One.) "All of the groups used the basal program." (Teacher Two--Phase One.) "I only used the basal materials." (Teacher Four--Phase One.)

The text book became the delivery system for teaching the students experiencing difficulties in reading. "Hopefully, at the end of the year, after having gone through the material, there would be some

growth, but I'm not really at all sure that it will take place with this particular series." (Teacher Seven--Phase One.) "Once the students were placed, I used the basal text to find out if they had any specific reading problems." (Teacher Two--Phase Two.) These teachers taught a textbook group of students and didn't seem to focus on the skills that were needed, outside of those included in the daily lesson.

The materials were blamed for missing certain important skills in the context of the reading process, thus causing problem readers. "This student's biggest problem was in comprehension. I think it is the fault of the reading series. There isn't enough material on comprehension." (Teacher One--Phase Two.) Lack of confidence in their experience as teachers to determine how to supplement these missing elements to instruct the problem readers was expressed in most interviews. In trying to solve their problems, these teachers sought out supplementary materials or sent the problem readers to other available specialists whom they stated as knowing how to judge the strengths and weaknesses of the problem reader. "I really stuck pretty much to the basal text. I just followed the teacher's manual all the time and it was boring for the students and for me." (Teacher Nine--Phase Two.) "I would really like to have some specific materials that would help me meet the needs of this class." (Teacher Three--Phase One.) "I used a supplementary phonics program with some of the students. Also, a general file of skill sheets would be helpful when you need practice sheets for a student with a problem." (Teacher Four--Phase One.) "I relied on the guidance of the reading specialist." (Teacher Seven--Phase Two.) "I don't have any special remedial materials in my room." (Teacher Nine--Phase Two.) "I wanted them to finish the



book just so I would know I had taught them all the skills." (Teacher One--Phase One.)

#### Allocating Time to Interact with Problem Readers Most Efficiently

This third element of the perspective is that of allocating time to interact with problem readers most efficiently. This allocating of time to various reading activities associated with the student experiencing difficulties in reading was seen by most classroom teachers as a difficult gap to bridge. "I think the one thing that bothers me the most is not having enough time to plan the way I would like to plan." (Teacher Six--Phase One.) These teachers tried to provide for individual problems within a small group setting. "Whenever I would work with this student individually she would make progress, but then you can't work individually with one child all the time." (Teacher Seven--Phase One.) "I couldn't cope with all the groups if I had a self-contained class for reading." (Teacher One--Phase Two.)

In most instances it was impossible for most of these teachers to work for any extended period of time with the students experiencing difficulty. Mothers, aides, and individual tutors were requested to provide the extra time for instruction. "When you are all alone with thirty-one students, you have many papers to check and materials to get ready. Even money for materials isn't going to help if you don't have some extra help, like an aide." (Teacher One--Phase Two.) "Even in my class of fifteen I could use someone who was qualified to teach reading to those students who were having problems." (Teacher Four--Phase One.) "One of the first things I would do district-wide would be to decrease

the number of students in the first grade room to a maximum of fifteen." (Teacher Seven--Phase One.) "I felt that this student needed more individual attention than it was possible for me to provide." (Teacher Three--Phase One.) "I don't have enough preparation time. If all I had to do was teach reading, that would be great, but I must prepare for all other subjects." (Teacher Seven--Phase One.)

#### Planning the Reading Period for Effective Teaching

The fourth element in the teachers' perspective is that of planning the teaching period for effective teaching. Even though these classroom teachers averaged several years of teaching experience, they seemed to be "winging" it when it came to the area of planning effective instruction for the problem readers. "I don't think I really had any objectives set up to know exactly where I was going with this student." (Teacher Three--Phase One.) "I do what I think is most appropriate in the particular situation. There are curriculum guides to follow, but frankly, I have a habit of ignoring what I'm supposed to be doing as I think many teachers do." (Teacher Six--Phase One.) "I have been watching students having difficulty. I don't really know what to do with them." (Teacher Eight--Phase One.) Teachers seem to "muddle about" not knowing how to plan instructional lessons that meet the needs of the student with problems. "When I see difficulties in my own classroom, I would like to know what to do without having to send the student to someone else." (Teacher Nine--Phase One.) "I really don't know what information I would collect to find out this student's achievement. I think our curriculum should be more structured and followed by all teachers."

(Teacher Three--Phase Two.) "I am sure there are materials to help these students, but I don't know what is available." (Teacher Nine--Phase Two.)

This confusion in understanding the student's problems in relation to the content of reading is seen as a critical area of weakness. Also, there is confusion in how to match performance level with materials and appropriate modes of instruction. "I just follow the teacher's manual most of the time and it gets boring for the students and for me." (Teacher Nine--Phase Two.) "Most of the things that I do with students are just feeling kinds of things. It just feels right." (Teacher Nine--Phase One.) "The technique that I have for helping students with reading problems doesn't come out of a book; it is just a mental attitude." (Teacher Five--Phase One.) "I don't know how much I accomplished with these students as far as skills are concerned, but I think they changed their attitude about themselves." (Teacher Five--Phase One.) "The more I learn about reading, the more I realize that teaching is not a snap thing and if you really want to do the right kind of job, you need specific training." (Teacher Four--Phase One.)

#### Displaying a Personalized Attitude in Relation to the Problem Reader

The fifth element in these teachers' perspectives is displaying a personalized attitude in relation to the problem reader. These teachers experienced many different feelings in relation to students experiencing difficulties in reading: happy feeling and sad ones, angry feelings or feelings of confusion and frustration, or just plain fear. In most cases, these teachers saw the student as unique in some ways, but were often confused in how to change their frustrations by helping the

student progress to a level commensurate with his/her potential. Very often these teachers would comment about their failure in not only knowing what to do, but how to do it. "I liked working with this student, but was frustrated because I didn't know what to do or where to go to find materials." (Teacher Three--Phase Two.) Working with students who are having difficulty bothered me a lot, and I was frustrated because I didn't know where to go to find out the specific problems." (Teacher Three--Phase One.) "I enjoyed him as a student in the classroom, but working with him in a reading situation was very frustrating, because I didn't feel that I was accomplishing as much as I could with him."

(Teacher Six--Phase One.) "I like working with him, because he's such a character. There's no one in the world that has as much personality as he does." (Teacher One--Phase One.) "I feel very comfortable working with this child. I feel good when he understands what he's supposed to do." (Teacher Eight--Phase One.) "I feel comfortable working with this student. In absolute truth there were days when I became angry and frustrated with him." (Teacher Ten--Phase One.) "I am really upset with this student. I had to keep myself from really being impatient with him. He needs someone with lots of patience. I was extremely frustrated with his weakness in not following directions and giving up and not reading things through from start to finish." (Teacher Three--Phase Two.) "He's fun to work with, very intelligent. He needs to think while writing." (Teacher Five--Phase Two.)

Question Two: What Are the Assumptions these Teachers Make about the Students that Support Their Perspective?

These classroom teachers' descriptions show that they exerted an

effort to improve the classroom environment, were interested in and concerned with student progress, and were aware of some aspects of the reading process. They believed that the students experiencing difficulties in reading could achieve adequate reading standards and if some failed to do so, it was the result of unsatisfactory school or home conditions. In other words, they felt that students' difficulties, either in themselves or in their home circumstances, could be overcome with sympathetic understanding on their part. "This student is a perceptual problem and this one had a very bad speech problem. This student has many physical problems. Another student was asthmatic and missed many school days. This girl came in from another school and was lacking in background experience for reading." (Teacher Two--Phase One.) "I felt like there were things constantly from home that were causing this student to have difficulty concentrating on his work." (Teacher Three--Phase One.) "This child is going through a very severe emotional trauma. The father she adored just walked out and the mother has back problems and is in bed most of the time." (Teacher Ten--Phase One.) "This student is hyperactive and couldn't sit still long enough to get any kind of learning accomplished." (Teacher Nine--Phase One.) "This student's parents are over-anxious and that created a problem for him." (Teacher Six--Phase One.)

These teachers didn't seem to have an extensive knowledge of reading diagnostic methods. "I don't know the specific reading problems. I didn't have the experience or understanding to diagnose this student's problems." (Teacher Three--Phase One.) "My conception of diagnostic teaching is very limited. I'm not aware of the phonics and word attack skills that primary teachers teach to first graders. I've learned a

great deal these last couple of years as I began with a new series."

(Teacher Seven--Phase One.)

In practice, the same methods were used for all students. They used the books and materials that were available in the best possible way. "Materials that I used to remedy this student's reading problems are not just directed to this student, but to the whole class."

(Teacher Four--Phase Two.) In securing additional materials, the teachers were not always sure what was appropriate in difficulty for their students. "Do you know of any materials that will motivate the unmotivated?" (Teacher One--Phase Two.) They liked their students, but were extremely frustrated with educational resources, class size, and appropriate strategies for helping those troubled students. "I would like to be able to go to the district office and take materials that I need to help me with individual students. I've been there many times and so often they tell me the materials I have requested are for special education." (Teacher One--Phase One.)

In the Graduate Diagnostic Reading Institute, the teachers frequently asked the following types of questions: "What is it about the students' difficulty that I should pay attention to specifically? "

"How should I look at their reading difficulties?"

In the teachers' descriptions very little reference was made to really knowing the student and his/her instructional needs. These teachers seemed to be aware of physiological conditions, emotional and social adjustments, interests, and attitudes, but the student's growth in specific skills and abilities in reading was not considered an essential element in their perspective.

The underlying element involving the extent of service the teachers give to a student at the time he/she needed help was not described in their perspectives.

A blanket approach, a continuous program of developmental reading without specific concern for the students experiencing difficulties, was the focus of the teachers' attention. Direct mention of reading problems clustered into four areas: progress in the simple mechanics of independent word attack; comprehension; word recognition and conceptualization; and rate of reading. "This student has difficulty with sight vocabulary and sounding out words." (Teacher Six--Phase Two.) "This student cannot comprehend what he reads." (Teacher Five--Phase Two.) "Most of this student's problems are in phonics and sequencing." (Teacher Three--Phase Two.) "This student's biggest problem was answering comprehension questions." (Teacher One--Phase Two.)

Some teachers' perspectives included reading strengths and needs of their students, but very little adjustment and flexibility of programs allowed the teachers to alter their general procedures or methods, whatever they might be, to meet the specific needs of the problem readers.

These classroom teachers do not assume the responsibility of administering tests to diagnose potential problems. Standardized tests were given as part of the school's testing program. These tests give a check on personal estimates of success, but don't allow teachers to assess the effectiveness of their own instruction in modifying reading growth. All in-depth tests were administered by a trained reading specialist within the school system, so most of the specific instructional needs that are diagnosed by the classroom teacher, through observations

made in the actual process of teaching, were not included as part of the perspective.

Assumptions frequently mentioned in the teachers' descriptions involved the students' environmental background and emotional problems. "Non-readers run in his family." (Teacher Four--Phase One.) "This student is hyperactive and is on medication." (Teacher Nine--Phase Two.) "Hyperactive, immature, not able to sit still." (Teacher Three--Phase One.)

A frequent reaction included in the descriptions was "It's easy for the reading teacher to look for individual problems and teach to meet individual differences when they can work with one or two students at a time." (Teacher Three--Phase One.)

The level of proficiency in coping with the problem readers remained at a low level. "This student has a problem. He is in third grade and cannot read third-grade material." (Teacher Eight--Phase One.) "This student has a well-developed sight vocabulary; however, he cannot consistently apply phonic principles to sound out strange words beyond recognizing initial consonant sounds." (Teacher Nine--Phase One.) These classroom teachers' perspectives remained at the level of identifying and interpreting the problem. What can be done within the framework of available time, materials, and school or district policies to help overcome the weaknesses of the students experiencing difficulties in reading was not described as an essential part of their role as classroom teachers.

Assumptions may be made that these teachers were accustomed to thinking that pre-established patterns or methods of classroom organization for instruction will take care of individual differences that were



known to exist. Teachers tried forcing the students with problems to accommodate him or herself to their classroom procedures rather than teachers accommodating their techniques to the students experiencing difficulties in reading.

Question Three: Which variables influence the teachers' perspective of their role in diagnosing and teaching students experiencing difficulties in reading?

"Am I qualified to help students experiencing difficulties in reading?" (Teacher Five--Phase One.) This question was asked during a lecture discussion during the first week of the Graduate Reading Diagnostic Institute. The teachers involved in the Summer Institute were eager for reliable information on exactly how they can do the job better and more efficiently.

Included in the interviews and informal discussions was a continuous reference to college or university preparation, attitudes of instructors, and in-service or postgraduate education. "The most important part of my education was student teaching." (Teacher Four--Phase One.) "I think university professors should be teaching examples." (Teacher Five--Phase One.) "Another thing which is a problem in all districts is meaningful in-service training. Both undergraduate and graduate courses were not very practical, and I think I came out on the short end." (Teacher Six--Phase One.) "One of the most valuable parts of my education was when I actually worked with children. Also, I think it is important to have university professors who have actually taught in an elementary classroom." (Teacher Seven--Phase One.) "My education got me a degree." (Teacher Two--Phase Two.)

Given the importance of the teacher within the classroom reading program, three variables were described as important aspects of these teachers' perspectives as they view their role in teaching students that are experiencing problems in reading. The first variable described the quality of pre-service programs; the second and third describe the quality of a teacher's professional preparation, including in-service instruction.

Almost all teachers made reference either during the interviews or discussions to their clinical experience or student teaching experience as being an indispensable part of their training. These teachers described the lack in their training in areas specifically related to learning problems and human development. Methods courses didn't supply answers to the problems of learning and how these problems should be identified and treated. Their professional programs tended to be highly concentrated in verbal cognition and very weak in training in the performance of teaching skills. "My teacher training background didn't prepare me to deal with learning difficulties and disabilities."

(Teacher Two--Phase Two.) An important part of their perspective hits at the very heart of most pre-service educational programs. These teachers felt they were not prepared to come to grips with the problems that students have in learning or given effective ways to cope with these difficulties. As changes occur in the field of reading, descriptions included the necessity for continued study that was available for their professional growth.

All twenty teachers were asked to fill out an observational form (see Appendix B). In response to Part II, not one teacher mentioned

having participated in an in-service education program that focused primarily on students experiencing difficulties in reading. Ten teachers preferred an in-service program that focused on materials to use with students who were experiencing difficulties in reading.

The Graduate Diagnostic Reading Institute is an example of postgraduate education programs available to classroom teachers. This type of training consists of experiences and studies to satisfy the personal needs of the classroom teacher. Since all the teachers represented different schools, the program provided a positive climate for professional growth among the teachers. The format included knowledge of testing materials available, reading in professional literature, sharing of instructional methods and procedures, along with hands-on experience in teaching and testing problem readers.

During the second interview only two teachers referred to their participation in the Summer Institute as valuable to them in their future work in the classroom. "I would use the Durrell to try and pinpoint problems and then I would teach skills through the content of reading materials." (Teacher One--Phase One.) "I think I'll know more after the summer at what types of things to look for and zero in a little bit more on specific things a student needs." (Teacher Two--Phase One.)

Conclusions could be made that either their summer work was not relevant to these teachers or they were only interested in pursuing credits they could apply to advancement. The postgraduate experience during the summer was not an important learning experience they included in their perspective. What would be the perspective of the ten teachers in Phase Two if they were given a chance to attend an in-service program

that is similar in nature but takes place in their own school setting? These teachers expressed a need to attend in-service workshops and institutes. Some teachers prefer formal course work at the university. Pre-service, in-service, and postgraduate work are important variables in these teachers' perspectives. An important consideration that reflects their perspective was expressed as follows: "I would rather satisfy my own personal needs rather than a need of my school system." (Teacher Nine--Phase One.)

Question Four: How do these teachers synthesize the skills of diagnostic teaching into their perspective?

These teachers' perspectives reflected patterns of teaching reading in the classroom. The patterns described during the interviews arranged themselves on a continuum. At one point of the continuum there is a teacher (Teacher One--Phase Two) that has heard some place that it is normal to expect a wide range of differences in reading performance within her class. "Teaching in a school system where students are ability-grouped for reading, there is just not enough time during the reading hour, especially with so many students, to do individual work." This teacher has one big reading group and teaches all students out of the same basal reader.

At the other end of the continuum is (Teacher Ten--Phase One), who is a very busy anxious teacher who attends conferences and workshops and is extremely interested in causal factors in reading disabilities. This teacher changes methods and objectives to conform with theories. Not only are there different numbers of reading groups, but students are

reading individually or in groups out of different materials at different times.

Within these twenty possible instructional approaches and classroom organizational patterns, the dominant perspective among these professional was to concentrate on the class as a group. This perspective left the individual student's strengths and weaknesses, the principles underlying a diagnostic approach, lost as these teachers searched for answers to teach the student experiencing difficulties in reading.

The students who have complex problems and difficulties in reading make up only a small percentage of the total numbers that are in these teachers' classrooms. These teachers' descriptions presented a single approach to teaching reading which does not allow the opportunity for making adjustments in instruction that are possible with a more diversified approach. These teachers did not see the skills of diagnostic teaching as a part of their perspective. They did not see their role as having the freedom to develop a reading program that would insure maximum growth for all students in their classroom. Most teachers responded that they diagnosed informally, and decisions were made at the feeling level.

Diagnosing, goal setting, and planning for the students experiencing difficulties in reading are important phases in the teaching cycle. The teachers in this study made reference to diagnosis as part of the job of the reading teacher in the school. Goal setting was not mentioned, and planning took place within the materials being used.

Knowing the needs of the students and making any modifications to correct any confusion before it becomes serious is an absent area of these teachers' perspectives. For these teachers a diagnostic teacher

and the skills of diagnostic teaching lie in the hands of the remedial reading teacher. It's this type of perspective that keeps remedial reading teachers in the schools.

### Implications

This study was designed to describe and explore classroom teachers' perspectives of students experiencing difficulties in reading. Achieving this purpose, the reader has the results of the interview data of twenty classroom teachers with direct observation and participation data with ten of these teachers as they were involved in a Graduate Diagnostic Reading Institute. The purpose was to assist in understanding classroom teachers' perspectives by describing how these teachers view their role in diagnosing and teaching the students experiencing difficulties in reading. Since there is a need for descriptive data in this area, this study of twenty classroom teachers was most appropriately conducted by using in-depth interviews and participant observation methods.

The population studied was selected by the researcher. Therefore, the ability to generalize the findings of this study are limited to the classroom teachers who are members of the specific population. These teachers' perspectives of students experiencing difficulties may be reflections of biases imposed by the researcher or may be inaccurate because of other confounding variables.

In a descriptive exploration of how teachers perceive students experiencing reading difficulties, it is possible to draw out implications for teachers, teacher education, and research on teaching and reading.

### Implications for Teachers

Diagnostic teaching is a fundamental element in a reading program. The elements that make up diagnostic teaching are based on the perspectives that teachers possess regarding their role in teaching reading. While exploring these classroom teachers' perspectives of diagnostic teaching, a very pervasive problem involving the interchanging of terms became evident. Diagnosis, reading tests, grouping, placement, evaluation, to name a few, were terms used by these teachers to describe their perspectives of diagnostic teaching. Confusing the results obtained from reading tests, which merely assess the behaviors related to reading, with diagnostic teaching which involves the use of many procedures, caused these teachers to become unsure about their role in teaching problem readers. The time has come for the reading profession to have one agreed on usage for many of the terms that teachers are exposed to in curriculum guides, teachers' guides, and professional journals. The teachers in this study performed the role of diagnostic teaching that reflected the instructional situation they served, which may or may not be appropriate with students experiencing difficulties in reading.

Efforts to reduce the high incidence of reading problems is viewed by these teachers to be the primary responsibility of the schools' reading specialist. However, these teachers described little, if any, correlation between the instructional effort of the reading specialist and their own classroom instruction. They described the approach of most reading specialists as traditionally pulling students out of their classes for individual or small group tutoring. The perspective of these teachers was that students with reading difficulties will

be helped by receiving individual attention from the reading specialist. In many cases they failed to see that if the students with reading difficulties were to be helped, the majority of remediation effort must come from them. Some teachers mentioned that if students would be in their classroom the entire day, this would give them more contact hours and some of the problems could be approached.

This study seems to imply that reading specialists need to adopt a new role. Being isolated from the day-to-day instructional activities of the classroom was seen by these teachers as an inefficient use of time and knowledge. These teachers perceived the reading specialist as assuming a more direct leadership role in the school and serving in a consultive capacity. They felt the need to have a closer working relationship with the specialist and wanted help with improving their classroom instruction.

#### Implications for Teacher Education

An observation made by these teachers is: "I learned more about teaching reading during my first years of teaching than in an education course." What these teachers seem to be expressing is that the demands of the classroom provide a setting for teacher training in reading that no university classroom or student-teaching experience can duplicate.

Teacher education in reading needs to take a critical look at the potential of the school as a teacher-training facility.

In-service education would be one avenue for teacher educators to take advantage of the school as a setting where teachers can learn to improve reading instruction with students experiencing problems in reading. These teachers expressed dissatisfaction with most in-service programs. In many cases their exposure was short-ranged and their



instructional needs were overlooked. An important area for improving teacher competency in working with students experiencing difficulties implies that teacher education in reading become attuned to the potential impact in-service education can have on a single school. In-service education arising out of the demands placed upon the teachers in this study could become a most powerful source of motivation for change. If teachers can select and use diagnostic instruments and answer instructional questions, such as

What has the student done in the past?

What can the student do right now?

What can be expected of the student in the future?

then the complex reading process will become an important part of a teacher's perspective as he/she works with problem readers.

#### Implications for Research on Teaching and Reading

The descriptions and explorations of this study reveal several important implications for research on teaching and reading. Studies are needed to find methods of judging between the needs that teachers have in their classrooms regarding reading difficulties and the pre- or in-service education they receive.

The teachers in this study collectively averaged from one to several years of teaching experience. A study that looked at teachers as they move through various stages of development and their needs at these stages would help teacher educators plan effective differentiated programs.

This study took a close look at the personal development of teachers, their perspectives, and beliefs. Studies of the belief

structure of individuals and how these structures function to affect behavior and perception is needed to test the assumption that behavior changes in teachers that do not involve a corresponding change in attitudes and beliefs are short-lived.

By getting inside these teachers' world one can begin to understand how they make decisions about students experiencing difficulties in reading. As they make decisions and act on these decisions, they develop a perspective of the problem reader.

The readers of this study will draw their own conclusions and implications. What is needed to advance knowledge in the field of teacher education in reading is the identification of some variable or set of variables that can be accepted as indicators of effective teaching. To identify such factors might revolutionize the field of reading education.

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## APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A  
INTERVIEW CARDS

---

1

In your classroom there are students who are experiencing  
difficulty in reading.

Picture one of these students in your mind.

---

2

Briefly describe \_\_\_\_\_ reading behavior.

What are some of \_\_\_\_\_ specific reading problems?

---

---

3

What materials and procedures did you use to diagnose  
\_\_\_\_\_ reading performance?

---

---

4

How much time do you devote to \_\_\_\_\_ in direct  
teaching of reading daily?

---

---

5

Briefly describe what typically happens during your  
reading period in terms of what \_\_\_\_\_ does?

---

---

6

Of all the various treatment procedures you had in mind,  
what materials did you use this past school year to  
remedy \_\_\_\_\_ reading problems?

---

---

7

If you were going to measure \_\_\_\_\_ achievement in  
reading, what information would you want collected?

---

---

8

How do you feel about working with \_\_\_\_\_?

---

---

9

If you could start the year over with \_\_\_\_\_, what would you do to help \_\_\_\_\_ achieve competency and satisfaction in reading?

---

---

10

Thinking back over the people and resources you have had during this year, what or whom do you consider have been major sources of help and support in accomplishing your teaching objectives with the students who are experiencing difficulty in reading?

---

---

11

If there were not constraints on money, time, and materials, what would you do to improve the quality of reading instruction in your own classroom, your school, and in the school district?

---

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12

What are some of the sources that influenced your development of a conception of diagnostic teaching of reading?

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13

What are some of the guiding principles that influence the decisions you make about students experiencing difficulty in reading?

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---

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14

How do you define your role in teaching students who are experiencing difficulty in reading?

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15

Looking back to your formal education, what do you think  
was the most valuable part of your training?  
What was the least valuable?

---

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16

If you had the opportunity to take an extended period of  
time off for learning, what would you learn about?  
How would you go about it?

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APPENDIX B  
INFORMATION FORM

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_  
SEX \_\_\_\_\_

PART I BACKGROUND AND TRAINING

- A. Total years teaching experience \_\_\_\_\_
- B. Grade level/s presently teaching \_\_\_\_\_
- C. What has been your teaching experience during the past five years?

<u>Grade level/s</u>	<u>School (city and state)</u>
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

- D. Undergraduate work

University \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

Degree \_\_\_\_\_

List course work in reading

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

- E. Graduate work

University \_\_\_\_\_ Location \_\_\_\_\_

Degree you now hold \_\_\_\_\_

List course work in reading

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Information Form  
Page 2

PART II

INSERVICE EDUCATION

A. Did you participate in an inservice education program during the school year 1976-1977? \_\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_no

B. Did any part of the program focus primarily on how the teacher organizes instruction for the student who is experiencing difficulty in reading? \_\_\_\_\_yes \_\_\_\_\_no

C. Who sponsored the inservice programs you attended?

---

D. Which of the following areas would be an inservice program that would be most beneficial to you: (put number one (1) in the most preferred areas (2) in the next, etc.)

\_\_\_\_\_ Administering and interpreting group and individual tests

\_\_\_\_\_ Research in reading

\_\_\_\_\_ Materials to use with students who are experiencing difficulty in reading

\_\_\_\_\_ Methods in remedial reading

\_\_\_\_\_ Defining the causes of reading difficulty

\_\_\_\_\_ Specific remediation techniques

\_\_\_\_\_ Other (identify)

E. Which course helped you the most in how to deal with the student who is experiencing difficulty in reading?