

# Spelling Progress Bulletin October 1962

Dedicated to finding the causes of difficulties in learning reading and spelling,  
"A closed mind gathers no knowledge; an open mind is the key to wisdom".

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*[Spelling Progress Bulletin October 1962 p1 in the printed version]*

## 1. An Announcement of Policy for the Spelling Progress Bulletin.

1. The Bulletin has decided it should not sponsor any one system of spelling reform nor enter into a prolonged discussion of the relative merits of any reformer's pet scheme. If it is necessary in an article, – to bring out a point, – the Bulletin will sometimes allow a few lines of poetry in the alfabeteer's system, but only if it seems to be a necessary point in the article, and if the Bulletin is allowed to disavow sponsoring the system.
2. The Editor will not be responsible for reading any communication or article offered for publication in the Bulletin that is not written in traditional English. He cannot take the time to familiarize himself with each and every new system devised, – and to shift from one system to another with each delivery of mail. Until there is some measure of public and official approval of one system of spelling reform, please do not expect an answer to a communication that is in unorthodox form.
3. The Bulletin will not print anonymous articles, nor articles from which the author requests his name be withheld. If he does not want to be the target of criticism, the best way to avoid it is to write such things as will not start a fight or invite trouble. If a contributor sends in an article clipped from another publication, we need to know its source and date not only to give credit but also to request permission to reprint. The Editor will accept assistance in writing an article whether the person does or does not want to be rewarded with a by-line or credit.

*[Spelling Progress Bulletin October 1962 pp2-4 in the printed version]*

## **^d HYPERLINK2. Augmented Roman News, edited by S. S. Eustace, London**

In Leicestershire thirteen infants schools together with a number of control group schools have now joined the experiment, and a different thirteen will also be using, A.R. for the remedial teaching of backward readers.

Two more infants schools will join the experiment in Walsall, one more in Burton and one in Staffordshire in the West Bromwich area, together with ten schools in Rochdale, Hougath and Southend-on-sea

### **Remedial Teaching**

A.R. is to be used for remedial teaching at four schools in the Birmingham area, three schools in Oldham, an E.S N school in London, and a number of other schools in Smethwick, Walsall, Dundee. Southend and Croydon.

A brief this report of Mr. Gardner's remedial experiment in Walsall is on another page A full report will be published in the November issue of EDUCATIONAL RESEARCH and there will be a similar article in the READING TEACHER.

### **Foreign Children**

An experiment is shortly to begin in Smethwick of using A.R. to teach English to non-English speaking children, who are mostly from India.

### **Training Courses**

Courses in training in A.R. are being held thruout July in London and at Leicester, Bedford, Stoke-on-Trent and Oldham. There will also be autumn courses; for teacher arriving from training colleges.

### **Visitors**

The schools taking part in the experiment have had several overseas visitors who have come to observe progress. They include Dr. Jeanne Chaul of the City College, New York; the Rev. McNamara of St. Patrick's Training College, Dublin, and Dr. Ben Wood of Columbia College, New York.

### **Mr. Downing a Tour**

Mr. John Downing, the Research Officer, is to make a lecture tour in America. He will give lectures on A.R. at Harvard, Syracuse, Chicago, Lehigh, Pennsylvania, the Conference of the Bureau of Educational Records, and the Conference of the United States Office of Education, Washington. The tour starts in October.

### **Publicity**

A.R. has been the subject of a long and favorable article in June in the DAILY MAIL, and of similar articles in the local newspapers of the regions concerned.

### **A Special Book**

"To Be or Not to Be" is the title of a new book by John Downing, giving a detailed description of the A.R. alphabet and the current experiment. It contains several long specimens of A.R., including

Shelly a OZYMANDIAS and extracts from Lewis Carroll, Boswell, Sheridan, W. S. Gilbert, and Winston Churchill, It is published in England by Cassell's and in America by Pitman's. Mr. Downing has also contributed an article to the BRITISH JOURNAL OF EDUCATIONAL PSYCHOLOGY on the relationship between reading, attainment and spelling irregularity.

### **The A.R. Alphabet in the Junior School, by W. K. Gardner.**

Sir James Pitman devised the Augmented Roman Alphabet as a means of preventing reading failure. The remedial education service in Walsall, however, considered that the alphabet may have an application with backward junior pupils. An experiment was devised by means of which 14 pupils admitted to the Junior school in September, 1961 were given a remedial course in reading based upon A.R. The results were compared with the achievement of 20 other similar pupils who received remedial teaching in traditional orthography.

It was found that the A.R. pupils had no difficulty in reading in the new medium and they were able to transfer to T.O. after only 16 hours of teaching. Their progress continued after transfer, by March, 1962 they were clearly superior to the pupils taught in T.O.

This application of A.R., pioneered by Walsall, indicates that there may be an application in remedying reading failure. It must be emphasized, however, that a great deal more work must be done before this is proved. Nevertheless, the results in this small, carefully controlled experiment have shown that fluency – and confidence gained in reading A.R., can be transferred easily to T.O. with many benefits to the pupils concerned.

### **Impressions of a Tour of A.R. schools, by Sir James Pitman.**

The impression I gained from visiting every one of the head teachers, class teachers and administrators taking part in the experiment has been of their efficiency, initiative, open-mindedness, courage and willingness to work. This application of a revolutionary idea has been magnificent. Intelligence and diligence in exploiting the idea were also evident every-where. The classroom walls were covered with apparatus. The door, the window, the wendy house, the sand pit., were all labeled in A.R. and the display sheets containing the names of the children able to tie their own laces, or having a birthday that day, or detailed for special duties, were all in A.R.

In terms of achievement, after no more than nine months, there appears to be eight patterns emerging,

1. Attention to the *medium* in which reading is first taught, without attention to *method*, is rewarded by significant improvement, out of all proportion to any improvement which may be looked for if attention is given to *method* without attention to *medium*.
2. The children are writing much earlier, Oddly enough, many of the 19 augmentations seem easier than some of the 24 retentions. The character "æ", which might be expected to give some difficulty, appears to be one of the easiest. Even "ŋ" gives little difficulty. Some of the retentions, particularly "n" and "a", seem to need more digital control than do many of the augmentations. Writing in A.R. seems easier than in T.O. for another reason: there are fewer forms to be learnt. Not only are all capitals eliminated, but the augmentations do not add to, but in fact replace characterizations otherwise made with two characters arbitrarily associated. For instance "th", "ch", "ŋ" are no more than replacements for "th", "ch", "ng" and cannot be regarded as imposing any significant additional burden.

3. Children use their knowledge of the characters to express themselves by creative writing, This free expression emerges far earlier than in T.O. and gives great satisfaction. I was able to read the writing books of many children. They were happy thru and thru when I could do so and could say "I have come all the way from London. I did not know you, nor what you were writing, but here I am able to read what you write."

This is as evident in the classes of the teachers who use the look-and-say approach as of those who use the phonic. From this it appears that better alphabetic analysis is compatible with look-and-say and vice versa, and that look-and-say no longer limits the vocabulary which the child may write *to what he has* read. A.R. children who have been taught by look-and-say write by a largely phonic attack. The child who wrote "osterælia" (australia) was outside his *look-and-say* vocabulary but right in the middle of the target for communicating. The alphabetic analysis of phonics seems to be in step with the arbitrariness of *look-and-say*, to the benefit of both.

4. Children accept the challenge of difficult new words and in solving them for themselves gain further confidence. Gone is the stream of worried faces with suppliant finger on an open page. "Please Miss. what is this word?" Instead, they sit quietly completing the book, and on returning it to book corner, find another one and resume their successful individual activity.
5. The volume of reading matter consumed in A.R. is astonishing. Altho there are now some 200 titles in A.R. we have never yet been ahead of the most voracious readers. The head teacher, who has had to ban reading (yes!) in the afternoon, is in part accommodating demand to supply. More and more books are being produced, but it seems the sky is the limit. For even those who have made the transition to T.O. enjoy keeping their eye in on A.R. There is a lot to be said for it since at this stage they are extending their reading vocabulary ahead of their listening vocabulary. It is beneficial that in thinking of such new words they should form an acceptable auditory image of them. Upper & lower case and copperplate are by this stage running as parallel forms of T.O. There can only be advantage in allowing A.R., with which the child is familiar, also to run parallel.
6. The vocabulary of the children seems to have developed greatly. Ease of reading seems to have released more of the child's capacity for the non-mechanical aspects of reading. As the mechanical function becomes less difficult, comprehension and enjoyment become easier and more important. The children appreciate the silent communication. The author has told them stories, given them information, and thereby developed their receptive ability. This is later matched by development of their emissive ability, as noticeable in their chattiness as in their creative writing.

Many of the children come from homes where the parents do not tell stories or speak about interesting facts. It is particularly valuable to put such children into a two-way communication in which the author and the reader act as the parent would in the best homes.

7. Transition to T.O. seems to be an inevitable by-product of reading skill in A.R. It seems nevertheless desirable to continue A.R. to an advanced degree of effortless familiarity. If the transition is too early attempted, before the child has developed a complete-sentence attack on new matter, he is held up by this lack of effortless familiarity. In the past he has relied on phonic analysis for new words, but this is unreliable and misleading. His better, sometimes his only, method is to read on. The word "gaol" for instance can be solved only by reading on and by a sense of probability based on language skill. At this stage, association of ideas, not of characters, is the key to success.

8. Discipline seems easier to maintain. No doubt this is because the children are enjoying themselves and acquiring that quintessence of humanity, the ability to communicate. The improvement is dramatic in remedial classes for older children who have failed after two or more years of teaching and effort.

These impressions are mine and also the teachers'. They are subjective in relation to previous classes where the same teachers used the same books and methods for T.O. They are not scientifically ascertained by planned comparison with the control classes. But they have been consistent enough in every class to merit weight as an indication of success.

Even the laggards are as far advanced as were the best in previous years under T.O. It is as yet too early to assert that the laggards will in due course read fluently, but there are grounds for supposing that they will. For are they not at least level with the best readers at a corresponding stage in T.O.? And are they not the very ones most likely to populate remedial classes?

It is also too early to say anything about spelling in T.O. This must wait, for no child learns to spell until he can read T.O. fluently, and this after much hard work. In any case the first year of infants' school is never devoted to this tiresome but essential task, Perhaps we may assume confirmation of the findings of previous experiments, that spelling is better learned if taught earlier.

My impression is that the work of my grandfather in the middle of the 19th Century has been rightly disinterred, and was as brilliant as Gilbert Murray, Lloyd James, Bernard Shaw, Daniel Jones, and which I have unswervingly believed. My good fortune has been in a certain timeliness, and above all in the persons of John Downing, the Research Director of the important members of the committee set up by the Institute of Education and the National Foundation for Educational Research, of the teachers, head teachers and staff of the Institute of Education, and in my own office, that is to say, of all those who have had the vision, the faith and the diligence to move mountains and to teach tiny children the joys and powers of the greatest of all human attributes.

### Comments

"The Times" in a recent celebration of its ten thousandth crossword, began with the words "a decachiliad is not to be sneezed at". Is it not curious that in "decachiliad" we transcribe the Greek  $\chi$  by 'ch' whereas in "kilogram" we use "k" and that in "decameron" we transcribe the Greek  $\chi$  with a "c"? Does this not indicate how shallow and secondary are all such typographical associations and how artificial the foundation upon which we transcribe from one alphabet to another?

For instance,  $\sigma \upsilon \nu \theta \epsilon \sigma \iota \sigma$  and "synthesis" have no relationship on paper at all; it is only in the mind, and a suitably conditioned mind, that the relationship becomes fabricated.'

We, who accept SYN and "syn", THESIS and "thesis" as being related, and see nothing objectionable in "kilometer" or "decade" must surely concede that it is communication which is paramount, and determines usage, and that what has become effective communication becomes hereafter justified only in the conditioned associations of the past. It is a mental process, not any detectable relationship between Greek and English forms, which makes us suppose that the conditioned and artificial is etymological and real.

**Sir James Pitman, London**

## Letters from Readers

I've been reading the "Augmented Roman News" for April. Some of our coadjutors refer to the North European languages as phonic, Are they? I know only the merest bit about Russian or the Scandinavian tongues, but their spelling is not altogether uniform unless Stalin has repaired Russian. I wonder why Miss Tudor Hart didn't refer to Spanish and Italian, which have no anomalies whatever in their spelling.\* German is pretty good this way but the German failure to distinguish between vocalized and unvocalized consonants, is trying. Miss Tudor-Hart also gives the impression that English spelling anomalies are due to pronunciation changes. A tremendous proportion have no basis in common sense, and never had. Misguided latinists and self-important Dr. Johnsons as well as others less blameworthy just made mistakes which have been perpetuated, e.g. "ghost", "sovereign", "sylvan".

\*SPB. *ed: not entirely true.*

**Maurice Harrison, Oldham**

### From Illinois

What you are trying to do is the same thing an engineer tries to do when he builds an electric motor with two sets of windings. The first set is designed for getting the thing started, and the second set in for running it, at normal operating speed. And the reason is the same too. Where a motor with only one set of windings is in danger of burning out under a heavy starting load, a beginning student placed under the heavy load imposed by the irregularity of English spelling is also in danger of "burning out", i.e. of succumbing to the challenge. Indeed, statistics show that a certain per cent do meet this fate.

**James Irons, Illinois**

### From California

Referring to the April issue of "Augmented Roman News" we wish to join Miss J. Sweet in questioning the true value of the hieroglyphic ligatures and some other modified spellings used in A.R.

Inasmuch as most any system would be sure to get the same results, it is questionable if the bastard symbols contribute anything whatever toward the favorable reports on the current experiment. Frankly, we never heard of any beginner having any trouble with the *ch*, *ng*, *gu*, *oo*, *sh*, *th*, *wh*, or *au* combinations. Thus it is quite obvious that the ligatures are based on more theory, rather than on reality. Furthermore, they are diametrically contrary to the theory of easing the process of learning to read T.O.

It seems that the promoters of A.R. are a bit confused themselves. They suggest that their critics fail to get the point as to the real purpose of A.R. being to expedite more fluent reading of T.O. Yet their deliberate attempts to offer phonetic perfection, in lieu of the familiar patterns of T.O. which are dependably constant (?)\*, indicates that they are the ones who do not get the point. How can they expect the public to understand that A.R. isn't supposed to be arbitrarily phonetic when they deliberately set forth needless phonetic modifications?

\*S.P.B. query.

**Leo G. Davis, California**

(Note from Sir James Pitman) I concede that no one has ever heard of beginners having trouble with *thr*, *ch*, etc., for they no more voice their difficulties with them than with "A", "a", and "ɑ", or with "has", "was", "ought", "once", etc; nor do they complain about bad handwriting, nor about "marjoribanks " for "marʃhbŋks, They are necessarily silent, and we must approach the issue with the mind of a child. If "ten" represents ten because the "t" has its alphabetic value, which ought to be unique and if "hen" represents hen because of the unique alphabetic value of "h", then it is unalphabetic for "then" to represent then, It is the initial character which starts the child on the alphabetic track and it must be easier for him to read an alphabetic three-letter word "then". The four-character word "then" is a sophisticated conditioning supportable only by those who can already read,

"Modified" spelling is another matter. Such modification, always incidentally, in the direction of conservative *similarity to T.O.*, does not conflict with the principle that any character shall have only one sound value.

Communication and similarity to T.O. are the only valid considerations. It matters nothing that a child should read "iether" when he speaks "eether" provided the form conveyed by the characters is one which he would unfailingly comprehend. The test is not what the reader speaks, but what the television or radio would accept for emission in their studios. They have to be accurate judges of what forms of speech enjoy the widest comprehension.

Just as "iether" is acceptable to them, so is "cristmas", "poestman", "kwestion", "often", "soften", because in the combination "st", "ft", the "t" may be pronounced or dropt without less of comprehension. Similarly "spaniel" is an acceptable speech form because "y" and "i" are interchangeable without loss of effective communication. "Middl" is as acceptable as "midl" because the slight pause justifying the double letters in middle in an insignificant factor in comprehension.

It is no doubt hard for those who have long had the aim of reforming our spelling, to appreciate that our aim is not theirs, but the different one of improving the teaching of the reading of T.O. Easier spelling is not the primary purpose of A.R. Spelling can never be made easier so long do people pronounce words differently from one another – unless it were permissible to start in the medium of print – a tower of Babel compared to that which is rapidly arising in "English" speech.

**Sir James Pitman, London**

Published by John Downing, Research Officer, University of London Institute of Education, London.

### **3. Spelling Skill as a By-Product of Instruction in Reading, by Roy P. Doyle, Ed. D.**

In September of 1960, the Campus Laboratory School, Arizona State University, began a longitudinal study of the effects of two different methods of teaching reading. One method utilizes the *New Basic Readers* of Scott, Foresman and Company and employs the procedure recommended in the *Guidebooks* accompanying these readers. The other method utilizes these *New Basic Readers* supplemented by a phonics program, *Phonetic Keys to Reading*, published by the Economy Company.

The study is investigating a variety of skills and attitudes related to reading. This report, however,, deals only with those results, obtained during the first year of study, which relate to achievement in spelling.

No instruction in spelling was given during the year to any of the first grade pupils serving as subjects in the study. For this reason an excellent opportunity was provided to study the extent to which *skill in spelling* developed as a natural by-product of each of the methods of teaching reading.

#### **PROCEDURE**

Equating Groups. The 27 pupils in the first grade class at the Campus Laboratory School in 1960-61 comprised the subjects in this study. On the basis of the Otis Quick-Scoring Mental Ability Test: New Edition, Alpha, Form As, and the Reading Readiness Tests of the Metropolitan Readiness Tests, Form S, the class was divided into two groups of equal ability. One group contained thirteen pupils, seven boys and six girls. The other group contained fourteen, seven boys and seven girls. The group of thirteen was chosen by chance as the experimental group. The other was designated the control group. Shortly after the school began, a boy in the experimental group moved to another school district, reducing the number of subjects in the experimental group to 12,

The findings presented in this report are based upon the results obtained for 26 first grade pupils divided into two equated groups, an experimental group of six boys and six girls and a control group of seven boys and seven girls.

The degree to which the two groups were matched can be judged from the following data. On the Otis Mental Ability test the control group earned a median score of 48.5 (mental age of 7 years 4 months) compared to 46.5 (7 years 2 months) for the experimental group. The inter-quartile range of the scores earned by the control group extended from 44.0 to 53.0. For the experimental group this range extended from 40.5 to 52.5. On the reading portion of the Metropolitan Readiness Tests, each of the two groups earned a median score of 56.5. The inter-quartile ranges were 52.4 to 61 for the control group and 50.5 to 60.5 for the experimental group.

The Median Test was applied to determine the statistical significance of the difference between the scores of these two groups on each of the two tests. In each case the critical value determined was between the .50 and .70 level of confidence. The difference between the scores of the two groups on these two tests were clearly too small to be considered statistically significant.



### **The Reading Programs.**

After a two-week period of the orientation to reading through story telling and experience charts, the students were divided into experimental and control reading groups as described above and formal instruction in reading was begun.

Each group, the experimental and the control, received separate instruction in reading in a small room adjoining the classroom. This room, constructed as an observation room with one-way vision glass, permitted the teacher to instruct each group in isolation and at the same time observe the children of the other group working at their desks in the regular classroom. Each group received approximately 22 minutes of reading instruction in the morning and approximately 20 minutes in the afternoon. A timer with an alarm was used to insure that both groups received instruction in reading for the same length of time each day.

The experimental group began in *Tag*, the first book in the *Phonetic Keys* series. After its completion they read quickly through the Scott Foresman Pre-primers. They then received careful instruction in the second *Phonetic Keys* book before reading quickly through the Scott Foresman primer. This was followed by instruction in the third and last of the first grade *Phonetic Keys* books. Finally, the students read the Scott Foresman first reader. In each case the Scott Foresman reading texts as well as other supplementary books were used as practice reading materials to permit the application and extension of skills learned through the *Phonetic Keys* approach. For the experimental group, the Scott Foresman reading texts were not utilized for systematic instruction as recommended in the Scott Foresman Guidebooks. Procedures outlined in the *Teacher's Manual For The First Grade* by the Economy Company were followed carefully.

The control group began in the first Scott Foresman pre-primer, *The New We Look And See*, and continued through the entire first grade series. Procedures recommended by the Guidebook were followed carefully.

All of this instruction took place in isolation from the classroom. Terms peculiar to each method were used exclusively during these periods of instruction, and not during other times when the groups were together. The children of each group were instructed to use their reading skills independently when reading in the classroom with the entire class. Only skills common to both groups were discussed with the entire class. Seat work which related to reading was carefully developed to deal only with these common skills. Most of the seat work dealt with science, social studies arithmetic, and writing.

Each group was sub-divided when the needs of pupils seemed better served by differentiation. However, for the most part, the pupils of each group progressed together through the materials at the same pace.

These two methods of teaching are similar in some respects. Both stress the importance of comprehension and interpretation, and both teach the sounds of the consonants in the first year. Both methods develop sight vocabularies, that is, words which are recognized by sight without reliance upon phonetic analysis. However, these sight vocabularies are developed at different times in the sequence of instruction and for different purposes. The Scott Foresman method *establishes a basic sight vocabulary initially* as a base of operations to facilitate the mastery of subsequent word perception skills, including phonics, which are gradually introduced and expanded. In contrast, the *Phonetic Keys* method *begins* with phonetic instruction and presents as sight words only those

which the child cannot analyse successfully with the phonetic skills which he has been taught.

Probably the most marked difference between the two methods during the first year of instruction is that the Phonetic Keys method begins instruction in vowel sounds initially and places major stress on them throughout, while the Scott Foresman method postpones all instruction in vowels until the second year,

### **Gathering Evidence of Skill in Spelling.**

Two lists of words were utilized as measures of spelling ability. The first the *Johnson Phonetic Knowledge Test 1*, consists of 26 one syllable words such as *cub*, *cob*, and *did*, each having a single vowel with a short sound. The other list consists of 18 words selected at random from the Scott Foresman primer. It includes words such as *said* and *come*, which do not obey phonetic rules, as well as other words which can be spelled properly by the application of phonetic principles. Both of these tests were administered in May of 1961.

### **Findings.**

The median number of errors by the control group on the Johnson Phonetic Knowledge Test was 18.25 compared to 1.75 for the experimental group. There was an interquartile range from 14.9 to 21.25 for the control group and .63 to 5.5 for the experimental group.

On the test of words selected at random from the Scott Foresman primer the median number of spelling errors made by the control group was 7.1 compared to 3.1 by the experimental group. The interquartile range of errors was from 4.7 to 8.17 for the control group and from 1.9 to 4.2 for the experimental group.

The Median Test was applied to the difference between the number of spelling errors made by the control group and the number made by the experimental group. For both tests, the critical values obtained were above the .01 level of confidence, indicating a high degree of statistical significance. The spelling errors of both groups were studied in an effort to determine to what extent they may have been produced by the misapplication of phonetic principles to words which are not completely phonetic. Of the 44 words included in both tests, the two which appear to be the most likely to be misspelled in this way are the words, *come* and *said*.

All the students in the experimental group spelled the word *come* correctly while one student in the control group misspelled it by writing the past tense *came*.

The word *said* posed a more difficult problem in spelling for both groups. Six of the twelve students in the experimental group misspelled it. Four misspelled it *saed* and two others misspelled it *sade*. It is interesting to note that none of these pupils who had received phonetic instruction in vowels gave the simple phonetic response *sed* which one might expect through misapplication of phonics.

Only two of the fourteen students in the control group spelled the word *said* correctly. The twelve incorrect responses were *sad*, *sad*, *sade*, *sail*, *sead*, *seb*, *siad*, *sied*, *sied*, and *ye*.

### Summary and Conclusions.

A class of 26 first grade pupils was divided into two equated groups on the basis of intelligence and reading readiness. The control group was taught reading as recommended by the *Guidebook* published by Scott, Foresman and Company for use with their new *Basic Reading Program*. The experimental group was taught as recommended by the *Teachers Manuals* published by the Economy Company for use, with the *Phonetic Keys to Reading*. Neither group was given any formal instruction in spelling during the year.

The purpose of the portion of the study, which is dealt with in this report, was to determine what differences in spelling skill would develop between the two groups during their first year of schooling. The pupils in the control group made a greater number and variety of spelling errors on both spelling tests administered at the close of the first grade, On a list of words selected at random from the primer, as well as a list of simple phonetic words, the difference between the scores of the two groups was statistically significant at the .01 level of confidence.

These results appear to warrant the conclusion that first grade pupils acquire greater skill in spelling from a reading program which provides instruction in the vowel sounds than from one which withholds this instruction during the first year, It must be pointed out, however, that the results obtained at the conclusion of the first year do not provide evidence regarding the ultimate effects upon spelling skill of a first grade reading program which instructs in the sound of vowels, This study is being continued for five additional years in an effort to determine what differences in spelling ability, if any, persist through the elementary grades,

Those students who received reading instruction in vowel sounds also made fewer errors in spelling those words which *violated the phonetic rules* they had been taught. Although this study provides insufficient evidence to warrant conclusions in this regard, the findings suggest the hypothesis that reading instruction in phonetic principles promotes the development of greater skill in spelling those words which do not conform to the phonetic principles being taught.

It may be that reading instruction in the common sounds of vowels makes pupils more sensitive to those words which deviate from the expected pattern and, for that reason, promote greater incidental learning of unusual spellings through reading. Further research is needed on this point as well as on: other effects which various methods of teaching reading have upon the development of skill in spelling

Roy F. Doyle, Ed. D., Colombia Univ.  
Director of the Laboratory School, Arizona State Univ, Tempe, Ariz,  
Member of Board of Directors, National Education Assoc.  
Past President of the Arizona Education Assoc,

-o0o-

Wise cracks transliterated into World English ...  
A teechur hoo iznt disturbd bie tauking iz in a klass bie hursel.  
Whie bee difakult when with a litl moer efort yoo kan bee imposibl?

[*Spelling Reform Anthology §21.3 pp276–278 in the printed version*]  
[*Spelling Progress Bulletin October 1962 pp7–9 in the printed version*]

#### **4. Reading, Spelling and Delinquency, by Jacob Chwast, Ph.D.**

By now it should be fairly commonly known that the juvenile delinquent is usually also a poor reader and a poor speller. Indeed, given his generally deprived conditions of life, why shouldn't he be? That is: why shouldn't he do badly in mastering school subjects whose relationship to his pressing everyday needs is scarcely perceptible, to him at least? Of course, in thus noting the concurrence of delinquency with reading and spelling deficiency, it is important to stress that this is merely a general rather than a universal relationship. Not all delinquents are poor readers and poor spellers and, most certainly, not all poor readers and poor spellers are delinquent. To note such a relationship as this does not necessarily impute that this is a causal relationship, nor does it, for that matter, impute, that it is not.

In regard to this general difficulty in reading and spelling, the delinquent is very similar to his other adolescent peers who can also lay claim to membership in the lower socioeconomic stratum of our society. Being raised in an environment as sorely deprived as this hardly enables one to view the world through rose-colored glasses. For the child as for his parents or parent, if any, life is a "scuffle". It is a struggle for existence from day to day and from place to place. Seeking immediate gratification by the delinquent and his family can be quite realistic in the face of foreboding and capricious times ahead. From this perspective, it becomes easier to understand the delinquent's poor capacity to control his impulses, his low frustration tolerance and his primary concern with the concrete and the tangible. Because of the latter, that is, his concern with the tangible in the here and now, the delinquent usually manifests a lack of proficiency in dealing with abstract concepts. This is so marked, indeed, that the delinquent is usually much better in *things* than *symbols*, he prefers the deed to the word, the action to the verbalization. Other aspects of his experience augment the delinquent's tendency to become non-verbal.

If one considers delinquency as one mode of rebelling against authority, it will be no mystery to anyone that the delinquent's contacts with representatives of authority – police, teachers, probation officers, etc. have customarily been unpleasant. Normally hostile, wary and suspicious, anyway, the delinquent becomes even more so in the presence of authority. For one thing, he will refrain from speaking because this will reduce his image of himself as being strong and brave to one of being weak and "chicken". Second, since he is probably a member of a gang, he does not dare run counter to its code by "ratting". Finally, he may fear that what he says might be held against him. The sad fact is that it often has. Perversely, the sad fact is also that what he doesn't say is often held against him. It seems as if he can't win. And he knows it.

Although other psychologists had noted in their clinical work the relationship between retardation in reading and spelling with delinquency, Margolin, Roman and Harari [\[1\]](#) were among the first to adduce objective data. These psychologists studied a large number of children referred to the clinic of the Domestic Relations Court of New York City. They found that these children who were between the ages of 7 and 16 and who had been adjudicated delinquent by the court, chiefly for repeated serious violations of law, were retarded in reading and spelling by over five years.

If I needed no other testimony on this matter, (but I have some and shall refer to it soon), I remember vividly the Monday morning I entered the office of an agency plunked in the heart of an area of dense delinquency. The senseless disarray of papers, mucilage-filled type-writers and destruction of other office equipment was appalling. More childish and thereby less appalling were the pornographic pictures daubed on the freshly painted walls. But most appalling were the obscene words inscribed under the art work: they weren't even spelled correctly. I must confess, however,

that I really was not too surprised. My own experience previously as a psychologist in a police-juvenile service and as a therapist for the Association for the Psychiatric, Treatment of Offenders had already considerably hardened my sensibilities.

I had also had the opportunity to collect some data on one hundred and fourteen delinquents known to the police and referred for investigation and follow-up action. This group consisted of seventy-four boys and forty girls.

Their ages ranged from 7 to 17 years with a mean of 13.2 years. The mean Intelligence Quotient was 90.6. These children had been picked up for a miscellany of offenses: burglary, assault, fire-setting, stealing, malicious mischief, extortion, truancy and running away from home. These data revealed the delinquents in this sample to be three years retarded on the average in reading and spelling. The precise figures are 3.0 years retardation in reading and 3.1 years retardation in spelling. A comparison of these results with those of Margolin, et al is particularly fruitful since the same instrument, the Wide Range Achievement Test (by Joseph Jastak), had been used and the same reservoir of delinquents from New York City had been tapped in both samples. Because of the nature of official procedures in New York City, the children appearing before the courts have committed more serious offenses than those disposed of by the police alone. Hence, if the court delinquents are more serious offenders than the police delinquents, the two year difference between the groups in the amount of reading and spelling retardation seems to point toward an obvious conclusion: the more seriously delinquent a youngster is, *the more retarded in spelling and reading he is likely to be.*

This was not all, however for some other crucial data about my group was also available. Most significant were the recommendations of the psychologist. These were based on complete batteries of psychological tests plus the use of case history materials when available or collateral sources of information. The batteries, themselves, consisted of the standard individual intelligence scales and other non-projective tests and projective methods including the Rorschach Inkblot Test, Thematic Apperception Test (by Henry A. Murray) Bender Gestalt Test, Sentence Completion Test, House-Tree-Person Test, etc.

In all instances, the same psychologist, or others supervised by him, tested the children. The recommendations, averaging between four and five per subject, are most revealing in many ways. They amply illustrate the concomitance of other types of disabilities with those of reading and spelling.

Now, what about these recommendations? First in frequency was the recommendation for 93 children (81.6%) that some form of intensive work with their families be undertaken. Next came the recommendation in 71 cases (65.8%) that the child receive some form of individual psychotherapy. Adding the 28 other cases requiring a psychological and psychiatric follow-up, the total number of children who were seen as needing help for their emotional or mental problems was 102, i.e., nine out of ten. To continue, in fifty-six instances, the recommendation was made that the delinquent become involved in a healthy group experience and for another fifteen it was recommended that the child receive group psychotherapy: all adding up to 71 or 62.3% of the cases. Another substantial group of 41 children (36.0%) were recommended for medical examination. Finally, the remainder of the recommendations although significant did not run high numerically. They covered referral to court, Big Brother or Big Sister assistance, foster home placement, residence relocation, school adjustment, advice to the worker, etc.

As one looks back on this group of delinquent children, delinquent within what might be considered the middle range of severity, one is impressed by the enormous amount of pathology in which they are enshrouded. It must be clear, if these data are accepted as valid, that the delinquent child who is

picked up by the police for somewhat more than a minor offense encounters serious difficulties in most aspects of his life. He has trouble within himself, in his family constellation, among his peers, and otherwise in the community. His actual school misconduct apart, it is equally clear from his reading and spelling deficiencies that the delinquent must inevitably encounter difficulties in school as well.

If these conclusions are granted, I think that the relationship between delinquency and reading and spelling retardation is more correctly perceivable. Before proceeding further, I must decry a tendency to oversimplify complex phenomena such as these under discussion in the quest for easy, mono-causal explanations with universal application. Delinquency may conceivably be *an outcome of* reading or spelling disability, and I am sure that some, cases can be found illustrative of this, or on the other hand, difficulties in reading and spelling may follow the child who has started to become a delinquent. In either case, truancy plays a pivotal role in reinforcing delinquency or impoverishing learning. Hence in the first case, it is possible for a child doing badly in reading or spelling to become bored in school and start to truant. Since these fundamental tool subjects are so generic to formal education, the child's frustration widens to most or all of his classes rather than remaining limited to reading and spelling alone. To avoid the chronic frustration he encounters, the child then begins to absent himself from school. Once on his own, with no creative task at hand nor adult supervision in sight, the chances for getting into trouble on the outside become very great indeed – so great that it is the unusual truant who does not wind up in the toils of the law.

As for the other possibility, if the child is already delinquent, the hold of school is lessened considerably for it cannot match the exciting world on the outside. Here, the pull of delinquent companions can be very strong and the child may begin to truant. The obvious aftermath of truancy is with rare exception, of course, damaged learning, reading and spelling are often early casualties,

Much more likely, however, is the possibility of both being embedded in a pathogenic matrix from which each may emerge as a symptom. If this is conceded, it would seem most desirable to approach the eradication of these forms of maladaptation more fundamentally by coming to grips with the underlying personal, familial and social root problems. Since this is a very ambitious undertaking, at best, it still remains urgent for us to cope with delinquency and to offset reading and spelling deficiencies by the practical, albeit limited, means we have at hand today. In addition, the reinforcing effects of delinquency and school disabilities in reading and spelling should act as a spur for more vigorous efforts.

This necessity to improve our remedial modalities is illustrated in Henry's case. An assaultive teenager, Henry had been referred for treatment to the Association for the Psychiatric Treatment of Offenders (APTO) by his probation officer. To the therapist, it seemed apparent that one of the first steps in successfully treating Henry, was to help him find a job. Henry had already left school. After much effort, a potential employer was found; Henry would become a mechanic's helper. As the therapist received the directions over the telephone, he wrote them down on a slip of paper and handed it to Henry. Without comment, the boy scrutinized it very carefully while the therapist repeated the directions orally and then placed the slip in his pocket. The boy did not show up for treatment the following week; neither did he show up for the job as the therapist later learned. What did happen was that Henry, who could not read beyond the second year level, did not know how to go to the place to which he was supposed to go. Also, and this is most revealing, Henry was ashamed to admit it. On the surface, this is a curious anomaly, for many delinquents who do not feel too manifestly guilty about their transgressions, feel gnawingly self-conscious about their inability to read and spell. It is for this reason perhaps that the delinquent is so proud when he overcomes this impediment. The simple fact is that many non-reading delinquents would like to learn altho they may have fought it all along. This inclination grows, especially as they grow older, since they begin to appreciate how concretely beneficial it can be.

One direct result of APTO's experience with many patients such as Henry, has been the provision of its own remedial reading services during the past few years. I should add that the offenders using these services are not only youthful but include adults also. This venture has proven successful in a double sense. It serves both as an educational medium and also as a treatment adjunct.

A similar result had been observed by Roman even earlier. [2] He studied the effects of what he termed "tutorial group therapy" on a group of delinquent boys who were retarded in reading. This group was compared to two other matched group of boys, one of which received remedial reading as usually provided, and the other of which was given interview group therapy. He concluded that the greatest positive change in psychosocial adjustment and the greatest improvement in reading took place in the group which had received "tutorial group therapy." It appeared that this method of treatment had two cutting edges. When the boys in the group refused to talk about themselves, they could show this resistance by reading; when they did not wish to read, they could resist by talking. In any event, improvement would occur simultaneously in two directions.

Finally, let me mention the tutoring which is being currently provided to gang-boys in a large community center in New York City, the Educational Alliance. This institution, situated in the lower East-side section of Manhattan, also became greatly concerned about helping delinquents-on-the-mend secure jobs. True, the trained workers in Operation Street Corner could make contact with the gangs in their native habitats: street corner, candy-store and pool-room, and then continue from there by cementing good relationships with them. They could even eventually bring them into the usually avoided building to engage in more wholesome activities than would be possible in the streets, but this was still not enough. The boys needed help, and lots of it, in doing better in their studies at school, and in preparing for future jobs and finding present ones. The Alliance, therefore, opened up a tutorial service for children in the community. Since, however, it could not secure remedial teachers skilled in a variety of subjects, it had to improvise. This it did by pressing into service some members of its group work staff. Again, somewhat similar to the APTO and the court experience, the worker was in a position to meet the youngsters at two levels of need: the first for increased competence in reading, for instance, and the second for enhanced socialization opportunities. As of now, aside from the direct benefits derived by the recipients of the service, this has been found to be an excellent vehicle for introducing a number of staff members, not otherwise in a position to do so, to antisocial youth in a positive and nonconflictual way.

In touching so briefly upon the complicated problems delinquency and disabilities in reading and spelling, I know that it is hardly possible to do justice to any. If I may, nonetheless, presume to generalize at this point, I would affirm that efforts to remedy ineffective responses to the total environment such as these must fulfill two conditions. The first is that the child must be provided with the *opportunity* to learn the appropriate response, whether it is to behave socially or to read and spell well. The second condition is that the child should have the *desire* to respond in these ways. Too often, in attempting to achieve these constructive ends, we tend to overstress one approach to the detriment of the other – that is, we focus primarily on increasing opportunities for achieving success in approved ways, whether in off-setting delinquency or a learning disability, or, on the other hand, we may focus primarily on the question of motivation which we will then see as one requiring some form of deeper working out within the individual.

Closing the gap between these two approaches: the external and the internal, is really the great challenge facing us. Opportunity systems and motivational systems must be made congruent; the *desire* to improve must be connected to the *chance* to improve. 'Taint easy.

Jacob Chwast, Ph.D., Director, Mental Health Consultation Service, The Educational Alliance, New York.  
Secretary, American Society of Criminology.  
Therapist, Association for the Psychiatric Treatment of Offenders.  
Consultant, New York Community Mental Health Board.  
Supervisor, Dept. Community Mental Health, Post-graduate Center for Psychotherapy.  
Lecturer, the Graduate School of Social Work, New York University.

[1] Joseph, B. Margolin, Melvin Roman and Carmi Harari, "Reading Disability in the Delinquent Child" *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry*, V. 25(25) 1955.  
[2] Roman, Melvin, *Reaching Delinquents through Reading*, 1958, Charles C. Thomas Pub., Springfield, Ill.

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[*Spelling Reform Anthology §7.3 p113 in the printed version*]  
[*Spelling Progress Bulletin October 1962 p9 in the printed version*]

**5. The University of Wisconsin**  
Department of Speech  
Madison, Wisc.

Pfc. William Russell,  
Lawson Hospital,  
Atlanta, Georgia.  
Jan. 2, 1946

Dear Mr. Russell:

Thanks for showing me your manuscript. I have never known a time when so many people were working on the idea of spelling reform; and the interesting thing is that more of the reformers are very intelligent in their suggestions. We do not lack for schemes for reforming our spelling. What we lack is a scheme for *selling* one of them, and only one (it does not make much difference which one), to the public. Its the old, old story about putting salt on the bird's tail. First you have to catch the bird.

I think you should work on the departments and bureaus of public instruction of the U.S.A., and of the several states. Sell them on a *method of changing our spelling*, not on a specific system of spelling. After the method has sold, then the specific changes can be decided easily.

If you propose a good, definite plan for bringing about the reform, I shall be glad to endorse it.

Sincerely yours,  
Robert West, Speech Pathology,

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[Spelling Progress Bulletin October 1962 pp10–19 in the printed version]

## **6. An Experiment in Education with the Laubach Literacy Course of Study on Films by Dana W. Allen, [6] Asst. Superintendent, Ohio State Reformatory.**

### **Introduction.**

In February, 1960, the Ohio State Reformatory was invited to conduct an experimental program in literacy education, for the purpose of evaluating the effectiveness of The Laubach Literacy Course of Study on Films when used as a medium of instruction for this segment of the adult correctional population. The invitation was accepted and the Reformatory became the first correctional institution to organize a research project with the Laubach Literacy Films, in problems relating to this area of instruction. The information contained in this report has been extracted from the complete study entitled, *An Experiment in Education with the Laubach Literacy Films*.

A progress report reveals that considerable effort and interest is currently being directed to the elimination of illiteracy in adult correctional institutions. Ten states and two public school systems are now (1962) employing the Laubach Literacy Course of Study on Films in organized programs of remedial instruction.

The organization of instructional procedures for the eradication of illiteracy presents a two-phase operation. Phase one is concerned with the development of basic reading, writing, spelling, and vocabulary skills. These areas are generally extended to the threshold of becoming functional. Phase two is concerned with the further development and extension of the basic skills through which the inculcation of reading habits, reading interests, methods of study, and the learning attitude may be reflected. For an extension of these remarks, see recommendation 13. Of special and related interest is the illustrative sampling of adapted literary readings which are ideally designed not only to inform but also to inspire the individual to extend and increase his reading efforts. One first learns to read by reading and then by reading one learns.

The directory of publishers, not intended to be exhaustive, merely suggestive, contains those which were found to be helpful in this study. Their publications are designed to service the materials of instruction for slow learners, retarded learners, and new learners. Space does not include our listing of library resource data which comprise the section organized to service the needs of adult literacy students. These materials are of first importance in servicing the requirements for content studies in literacy education programs.

For information on the procurement of the literacy Education Films and related instructional aids, contact Mr. Mays Behrman, President, Behrwood Foundation, Brasstown, North Carolina.

### **Aspects of Adult Literacy Education.**

The problem of illiteracy has been called a national disgrace. Assaults on illiteracy have been launched, sporadically, many times in many places. At the turn of the century, it was considered an area of work for those burning with missionary zeal. At that time many "moon-light schools" were organized in southern mountain regions to eliminate adult illiteracy. The solution of the problem, and the removal of a national scandal, requires more than a song and a prayer. It requires more than a fireplace, a shovel and a piece of charcoal in the hands of a motivated individual. It requires a classroom, a teacher, a method, and a course of study. The first requirement is not too difficult to acquire. The last three are: The Laubach Literacy Course of Study on Films, however, provides the teacher, the method of instruction, and a course of study, all of which are ideally designed to assist the adult illiterate in finding a solution to his educational problems. The stultifying effects of illiteracy, when viewed in terms of occupational, social, economic, civic and inter-personal

relationships are matters of public concern.

In discussions bearing on Federal Aid for Education, these deplorable problems are restated and re-emphasized with considerable frequency.

National, state and local leaders know that illiteracy weakens democracy; negatively effects occupational efficiency; prevents growth of wholesome family life; impedes industrial, economic, and social progress; restricts individual creative expression and contributions; and limits personal happiness and satisfaction. These men also know, as do countless others, that illiteracy is a national blight that should be eradicated at the earliest possible date, and that it will take intelligent planning and totally organized effort to do the job.

At the present time, the number of adult illiterates has been estimated to include 2% of the white, and 10% of the colored population, [11](#) There are, approximately, ten million functional illiterates in the United States – a conservative estimate. These ten million Adult Americans, comprising more than the aggregate of populations in:

Guatemala (2,787,000)

Laos (1,021,000)

Lebanon (1,143,000)

Panama (801,300)

Denmark (4,045,200)

cannot read and write well enough to:

1. read and write a letter,
2. read the news.
3. contribute to the national welfare,

These are Americans who:

1. CANNOT serve in the armed forces (700,000 rejected in World War II; over 350,000 in the Korean War).
2. CANNOT quickly adjust when migrating to a strange environment.
3. CANNOT offer their children the opportunities of the average educated American.
4. CANNOT compete with the educated American for job opportunities.
5. CANNOT provide the kind of family life required for normal child growth and development.

The ultimate goal in literacy education is the development of a socially mature and integrated human personality. Illiterates, who do no more than acquire competency in the command of functional processes are, at best, fractional citizens. Literacy education is the key that unlocks the doors to other basic areas of living. The acquisition of fundamental learning experiences, in terms of expected outcomes, will be reflected through an improved status in the following areas:

1. Daily life activities.
2. Financial benefits.
3. Kind of recreation.
4. Personal and social adjustment.
5. Citizenship.
6. Philosophy of life.

In reference to items 4,5, and 6 (listed above), the following comment is of considerable interest and enlightenment:

"There are several ways that degree of reading proficiency may influence the personal and social adjustment of a person. Emotional disturbances are likely to accompany reading disability. In many cases, such maladjustment is due to frustration in the learning situation. The need of successful

achievement is fundamental at all educational levels. When there is severe reading retardation, normal personality development is likely to be inhibited. The frustration due to continued failure in reading may manifest itself in any one of several ways. The child may compensate for his feeling of inferiority by exhibiting bullying and blustering behavior. Or he may retire from active participation in school or play activities and seek the satisfaction he desires through day-dreaming. Continued frustration in the learning situation may lead to truancy and even juvenile delinquency. In fact, evidence has been gathered which indicates that in certain instances, failure in reading tends to contribute to juvenile delinquency." [\[2\]](#)

Illiteracy aborts and stultifies the individual's quest for complete living and happiness and is as inimical to the democratic ideal as communism.

Illiteracy affects many people in many ways. There are several problems that have been found to be closely associated with illiteracy. In a previous study, the U.S. Department of Health, Education and Welfare cited a high correlation between illiteracy and:

1. Incidence of poverty.
2. Incidence of disease.
3. Incidence of malnutrition.
4. Incidence of infant and maternal deaths.
5. Incidence of occupational inefficiency.
6. Incidence of superstitious beliefs.
7. Low output and value per farm.
8. Low wages.
9. Low savings deposits.
10. Low per capita retail sales.
11. Low circulation of newspapers and magazines.
12. Low rental values.
13. Low per capita income.
14. Low income tax returns.
15. Low-level aspirations and accomplishments.
16. Lack of medical services.
17. Lack of good human relations.
18. Lack of modern conveniences.
19. Lack of home ownership.
20. Lack of civic effectiveness.

Fortunately, the evils accompanying illiteracy can be treated. Illiteracy can be eliminated. Education, through an all-out assault, is the cure. In the United States, the battle against illiteracy has not been won because it has not been fought. Dr. Frank C. Laubach, as a Congregationalist missionary in the Philippines 30 years ago, began an educational project on the literacy frontier that took him into 97 countries involving 260 languages and dialects. [\[3\]](#) His first objective was to teach illiterate natives how to read in their respective languages.

The Laubach approach for teaching adults is sometimes known as the "picture-word-letter" procedure. It adheres to the principles of adult learning. Its content is adult. It appeals to and motivates adults in the acquisition of new learning. The adult learns better through association than by rote memory. Picture associations help him recall the key words in the lesson. A minimum of memorization is required in progressing from the known to the unknown.

Some of the basic principles of learning previously mentioned include the following:

1. Words appearing most frequently (Thorndike-Lorge list of 1000 most frequently used words) in the English language are included in the basic vocabulary.
2. Words most familiar, in terms of adult usage, are employed to illustrate each sound.
3. New words are repeated at least five times in each lesson.
4. New sentence patterns are developed in each lesson.
5. One new letter is introduced in each lesson.
6. Progress is from the known to the unknown in short easy steps. The student learns by doing.
7. Stories are written about pictures to achieve the maximum comprehension. The content of the stories and lessons is designed for adult appeal.
8. Exercises involving drill review, and practice are extensively employed.
9. Regular and irregular forms of spelling English words are taught. (There are 168 irregularly spelled words in the list of 1600 highest rating words).
10. Motivation, the most important factor in the learning process, is a one-word summary of how the Laubach Literacy Course of Study achieves its purpose.

The materials of instruction which are placed in the student consist of:

1. Reading Readiness Charts and Stories.
2. Streamlined English.
3. Streamlined Writing, Book 1.
4. Streamlined Writing, Book 2.
5. Vocabulary Exercises.

These materials are geared to the 98 filmed lessons, each 30 minutes long, which are taught by an expert literacy teacher. The instructional materials and teaching guides which are placed in the hands of the teacher consist of:

1. Suggestions to teachers.
2. Summary of lessons.
3. Guide to Reading Readiness.
4. Teacher's Manual for Streamlined English.
5. Wall Charts and Stories,
6. Streamlined English, Combined Words.

### **A Dilema.**

Helping the adult illiterate attain functional literacy has, traditionally, been one of correctional education's most perplexing areas of instruction. This situation exists primarily because of the absence of developed materials for teaching adult illiterates, adequate courses of study, qualified teachers of adults, and the desire or felt need for educational betterment on the part of the learner. It is almost axiomatic to note that educational programs are assured of successful outcomes when they appeal to, and enlist the enthusiasm and good-will of the student.

Prisoners, who possess sufficient competence in using the basic tools of learning, and are progressively motivated, do well in many areas of learning activity. They successfully complete grade school, high school, and college courses. For them, there exists a plethora of instructional data.

This happy situation, until recently, did not exist for administering to the educational needs of adult illiterates. For them, there was a dearth of resource material.

The teaching of adult illiterates is now a problem of lesser magnitude. The Laubach Literacy Course of Study on Films has demonstrated its potential for successfully eliminating illiteracy. The films are not only a course of study, and a method of instruction, but also demonstrations of expert

teaching. As the instruction on film progresses, the learner is motivated to greater activity. This characteristic of the Laubach Literacy Course delineates the beat in classroom instruction.

The Laubach Literacy Course of Study is more than a total curriculum in literacy education, It is an in-service program in teacher education. Teachers who participate in this course of study become improved teachers. In scope, the program's 98 films, of 30 minutes each, present instruction in the following areas:

1. Alphabet learning.
2. Letter formation (writing).
3. Number formation (writing).
4. Consonant sounds.
5. Vowel sounds.
6. Letter combination sounds.
7. Syllable formation.
8. Word study (pronunciation).
9. Vocabulary development.
10. Spelling.
11. Accent marks.
12. Dictionary skills
13. Punctuation skills.
14. Reading skills.
15. Writing skills.
16. Language skills.

In the literature on literacy education, the word phonics appears with considerable frequency, Some educationalists treat the word phonics with all the opprobrium that, befits a dirty word, Relative to the merits residing in some, none, or much use of phonics, the writer is reminded of a quotation from Pope's *Essay on Man*.

For forms of government let fools contest,  
What'er is best administered is best.

A slight alteration in wording helps settle the question of whether "To phonic, or not to phonic", and the couplet would read:

For forms of teaching let fools contest,  
What'er is best learned is best.

The super-kindergartner, who participates in adult literacy instruction, has been trying for years to figure out the pronunciation of new words through a phonetic approach. This has been his only technique in self-education.

Before moving to the New Frontier, those of us who labor and toil in correctional enterprise should take a new look at an Old Frontier.

The greatest gains in the reconstruction of human lives, character, and American citizenship are to be registered through efforts directed at the elimination of illiteracy and the advancement of low-level academic achievement The illiterate needs no longer to be the forgotten, ignored, and neglected citizen who is destined to wander aimlessly as a maverick in America's educational wasteland. Those who are headed-off at the pass and returned to the old corral are, once again, available for instruction.

Phonetic instruction is the basic technique which imparts a new understanding in the art of communication to the adult illiterate, It teaches the simple fact that letters have sounds. It teaches how to sound out the various combinations of letters that make up words. It helps the individual learn to help himself.

Once the student knows the sounds of the letters in the alphabet and the sound of the various combinations, he can read almost 85% of the words in the English language, He is taught to think of the letters in a word, and this is the best kind of teaching in spelling. This, in brief, is the whole principle of phonics.

Prominent educators began the transition from the phonic system to sight reading in the late twenties, Consequently, sight reading is the only method most teachers have been taught to teach. Sight reading puts a heavy burden on both the teacher and the learner. The learner has no clue to help him attack a new word. He has to be told what the word is; then he must memorize it. This is how it becomes a functional part of his vocabulary.

Poor readers, retarded readers, reluctant readers, and low achievers never discover phonetic techniques on their own. They never realize that letters have sounds. They never realize that they can read even strange words, by sounding out the letters in the words, until they have been so instructed.

This, in brief, is the simple explanation of the basic approach which enables the Laubach Literacy Course of Study to reach its clientele and administer to their educational needs. This was the system employed by the Army, in World War II, for the instruction of illiterate soldiers.

### **Individual Background Data.**

Those who visit the reformatory and view the prison population usually ask questions which are designed to gather information concerning "What manner of men are these?"

It is our custom, throughout the year, regularly to statisticate all aspects of the population. The inmates are counted, weighed, measured, tested, interviewed, and analysed. The derived data are statistically treated, tabulated, translated into voluminous reports, edited, and eventually "stashed." The existing reports and records are generally made available to students and others who are conducting research programs.

This statistical treatment serves many important purposes, relating to the institution's custody and treatment functions. First, there is a need to acquire insights relating to the physical, mental, social, educational, and occupational backgrounds of three with whom we work. As a second consideration, the referred data reflects the nature and extent of change that are characteristic of the general population. As a third consideration, the interpretation of statistical data is of first importance to the organization and administration of correctional treatment programs. Then, too, those who conduct guided tours or address service clubs and other related interest groups must be well-informed.

Regarding the query, "What manner of men are the use?" TABLE I presents some information regarding the segment of the reformatory population which was enrolled in The Laubach Literacy Course of Study.

**TABLE I**

A study of the group in terms of educational and social characteristics

Item	Factor	Cases	Per Cent	Quartile Distribution
1	Age			
	26-30	9	6.3	Q3-22.5 yrs.
	21-25	38	26.8	Q2-19.7 yrs.
	16-20	95	66.9	Q1-17.8 yrs.
2	Post-School years			
	19-21	1	.7	Q3-11.3 yrs.
	16-18	2	1.4	Q2-5.8 yrs.
	13-15	3	2.1	Q1-1.2 yrs.
	10-12	17	12.0	
	7-9	22	15.5	
	4-6	44	31.0	
	1-3	53	37.3	
3	Claimed education			
	11-12	6	4.2	Q3-9.2 grade
	9-10	34	23.9	Q2-7.9 grade
	7-8	61	43.0	
	5-6	29	20.4	
	3-4	9	6.3	
	1-2	3	2.1	
4	Educational Achievement Grade Orientation*			
	6	1	.7	
	5	19	13.4	Q3-4.3 grade
	4	22	15.5	Q2-1.97 grade
	3	25	17.6	Q1-no score
	2	2	1.4	
	1	0		
	No score	73	51.4	
5	Intelligence**			
	101-130	1	.7	Q3-87.3 IQ
	90-109	22	15.5	Q2-79.9 IQ
	70-89	95	66.9	Q1-72.4 IQ
	50-69	20	14.0	
	No score	4	2.8	
6	Race			
	White	82	57.7	
	Colored	60	42.3	
7	Marital Status			
	Married	35	24.6	
	Single	107	74.7	
8	Parent			
	Yes***	28	80.0	

No	7	20.0
9	Size and Type of Community	Cases Per Cent
	Open Country (Farm)	18 12.7
	Small Town (to 2500)	19
	Large Town (to 5000)	6
	Small City (to 25,000)	19
	Large City (to 50,000)	14
	Metropolitan Area (over 50,000)	66 46.5

\* Stanford Achievement Test, and Metropolitan Achievement Test.

\*\* Ohio Penal Classification Test (written), and Wechsler Adult Intelligence Scale (verbal)

\*\*\* 28 of the 35 married men fathered 62 children. The number of children per family ranged from 1 to 6; the average number of children per family being 2.2.

The number and distribution of children per family;

No. of families	No. of children	Total
2	6	12
1	5	5
1	4	4
5	3	15
7	2	14
12	1	12
28		62

**TABLE 2**

Summarized Statistical Concepts (from Table 1)

Item	Factor	Quartile Distribution		
		Q1	Q2	Q3
1	Age (years)	17.8	19.7	22.5
2	Post-School-Years	1.2	5.8	11.3
3	Claimed Education Graded	6.3	7.9	9.2
4	Educational Achievement Grade	0.0	1.9	4.3
5	Intelligence	72.4	79.9	87.3

An examination of TABLE I relating to those involved in literacy education reveals that:

1. The commitment ages range from 16 to 30 years. The median age is 19.7 years. 75% of the enrollees are 22.5 years of age and less. In this respect the age distribution for the literacy group is representative of the total prison population.

2. The post-school-years (years since last in school) range from 1 through 20. The median number of years is 5.8. 75% of the enrollees have been out-of-school 11.3 years and less. The time is never too late for them to assume, once again, the role of "school-boy with shining morning face," especially when a good course of study invites and beckons.

3. The claimed educational experienced of the illiterate inmates ranged from 1 through 11 grades of school. The median number of grades completed was 7.9. 75% of the enrollees completed 9.2 grades of public school and less.



4. The educational achievement grade status derived from standardized test scores ranged from no score (by 73 inmates) to a sixth grade level (by one inmate). The median educational grade achievement was 1.97. 75% of the inmates achieved a grade of 4.3 and less. 73 of the 142 illiterate inmates were unable to register an achievement score equivalent to grade one.
5. The learning aptitude scores ranged from no score (by four inmates) to an IQ of approximately 120 (by one inmate). The median IQ was found to be approximately 80 (79.9). The intelligence score is greatly influenced by factors related and associated with low educational achievement, and a low cultural environment. It does not indicate a problem of great concern for purposes of instruction. Those engaged in literacy education should note that IQ tests, though aimed at measuring intelligence rather than learning, necessarily reflect exposure to books, conversation, and even material gadgets 75% of the illiterate inmates registered an IQ score of 87.3 and less.
6. The colored population contributed 42.3% of the group. The white population contributed 57.7%.
7. Approximately 25% of the group were identified as living in "marital bliss" prior to commitment.
8. 28 of the 35 married men fathered 62 children. The number of children per family ranged from 1 to 6; the average number of children per family being 2.2.
9. 30% of the illiterate group were from the small town and open country areas. 70% of the group were from the city and metropolitan areas.

According to this analysis, the median measures define the most typical inmate an individual 19.7 years of age, who has been out of school for a period of 5.8 years. He did not "linger long" in the halls of learning after attaining the age of 14. He claims to have satisfactorily completed the 8th grade, but his efforts on the educational achievement test, which approximate a second grade achievement level, do not sustain this claim. A learning aptitude of 80 is a score quite respectable when viewed with reference to his environmental, cultural, and motivational limitations.

### ***Principles of Administration***

The Classification Committee, informed and guided by surveys, interviews, tests, and recommendations of the orientation staff, assigns all individuals to organized instruction and on-the-job training programs. The inmates' efforts in rehabilitation enterprise are best programmed when consideration is given to their interests, needs, abilities, previous experiences, and future plans.

The candidate for literacy education classes is designated at the time of original classification. A vast number of educational, psychological, sociological, and economic factors are fully considered before assigning an individual to basic (3R) instruction. Some factors, in addition to evidence of illiteracy, per se, which characterize the individual's educational background and indicate a need for this special program of instruction include the following:

1. Evidence of low achievement and retardation.
2. Evidence of non-attendance or early withdrawal,
3. Evidence of satisfactory learning potential.
4. Evidence of willingness to register progress.
5. Evidence of physical and mental fitness.

At the implementation of the Laubach Literacy Course of Study, the psychologist reviewed the orientation data for potential enrollees. He recommended school assignments for those appearing most in need and able to register progress. Consequently, four literacy classes, of 40 students each were organized into two groups. Two classes in each group were assigned to a school and work schedule on alternate days. Two of the classes in illiteracy education met each day.

The literacy education films were presented, during the morning session, in an atmosphere that simulated a realistic classroom-teacher-pupil situation. Necessary writing materials and study guides (workbooks) were issued at the beginning of the filmed instruction. The students were directed to participate in the learning experiences rather than merely become viewers of the action. They were instructed to follow the directions of the teacher as the learning exercises developed and progressed. They were advised to accept the teacher, in the films as their personal instructor. They were cautioned to remember that she was talking to them and not to an imaginary class. This orientation in teacher-pupil rapport, at the beginning of the filmed lessons, helped the students to acquire the desired learning attitude for educational experiences with the Laubach Literacy Course of Study.

From 4 to 6 films were taught each week. The filmed instruction, in the morning, was followed by classroom instruction, review, practice, and drill in the afternoon. In general, during the afternoon sessions our teachers, using the work-textbooks, retaught, reviewed, and re-worked the lessons that were previously presented on the film. This pattern, which made use of 4 and sometimes 6 films each week, by the four classes, allowed one day each week for further drill, review, and practice in the consolidation of learning experiences. The educational value of the filmed lessons was enhanced by the active participation of the learner during the presentation of the lessons. The Laubach Literacy Course of Study lends itself ideally to this method of instruction. The teacher, in the film, invited and encouraged active participation at all times. Due to the excellence of learning motivation supplied by the teacher, and the course of study, on films, this program of instruction offered a renaissance in learning for those who desired one-more-drink from the fountain of knowledge.

As an item of passing interest, it should be mentioned that many students wanted to purchase copies of the prepared work-textbooks which were used during the instruction. The desire for personal ownership of instructional data is commendable. An educational program which is able to entice meager personal funds, for the purchase of study materials, in competition with the satisfying appeal of hosts of gastronomic delights on sale at the commissary must, of necessity, possess high motivational potential.

The educational achievement grade status was evaluated by the administration of the following standard achievement scales:

1. Stanford Achievement Test, Advanced Battery, Partial, Form J,
2. Metropolitan Achievement Test, Elementary Battery, Form A,
3. Metropolitan Achievement Test, Elementary Battery, Form B.

These scales were administered in the listed order, as the program progressed and as frequency as evaluations of educational achievement were required. For purposes of research, all students were surveyed before, during, and after completing the course of literacy instruction.

It is generally known that the quality of educational achievement depends upon the quality of teaching. There is no substitute for classroom-teacher instruction. The principles of classroom instruction which characterize the Laubach Literacy Course of Study are based upon modern psychological concepts of learning.

Some of the guiding principles relating to the mastery of subject matter are summarized as follows:

1. Make the learning situation as real as possible.
2. Start at the level of the learner. Each individual completes with himself.
3. Encourage thoughtful practice to assure mastery of skills,
4. Plan a variety of practice and review exercises, properly distributed.
5. Inform students of their progress.
6. Consolidate learning experiences through meaningful application. Critically select reading materials that contribute to significant learning accomplishments.
7. Make use of multiple-sense appeal.
8. Provide for individual differences.
9. Co-ordinate learning and doing.
10. Integrate new learning with previous experiences.

In this evaluation, the educational achievement grade increment is the difference in educational achievement test scores which were registered before, during, and after the individual's participation in the learning experiences. The total course of study, at this time, extended through 16 weeks of alternate daily work and classroom schedules. Everyone registered progress – the average educational achievement increment being 2.5 grades. The amount of progress increased with the length of time in school.

In relation to time spent in classroom study, the educational achievement grade increments were phenomenal. The acquisition of new learning in the basic fundamentals of instruction is evidence of the course of study's potential for implementing a realistic program of educational rehabilitation.

The qualitative factors represented by learning content, materials for instruction, and methods of teaching are standard curriculum elements, The quantitative consideration, or "how much" learning, depends upon the administrative techniques employed in the organization of instructional procedures. Some of the factors, which are of first importance, to the quantitative consideration, or "how much" learning, in programs of adult literacy education are the following:

1. Number of films viewed per lesson.
2. Number of films viewed per week.
3. Number of classroom recitations.
4. Number of students per class.
5. Recognition and treatment of individual needs.
6. Time spent in review, drill and practice.
7. Time spent on cell study assignments.
8. Introduction of correlated learning activities.
9. Development of integrated study activities.
10. Knowledge of progress in learning experiences.
11. Ownership of text materials.
12. Time, available to the individual for participation in the course.

### ***Presentation of Data***

During the first presentation of organized research in literacy instruction, 132 students were absented from the course. These withdrawals were due to inter-institution transfers, transfers into honor status, and parole. Educational achievement progress evaluations were administered to those who left the course, and all data were included in the study.

On April 11, 1960, four classes consisting of 155 illiterate inmates began the course of instruction which extended through 16 weeks of alternate daily school and work assignments. The project was completed Aug. 12, 1960, A total of 288 inmates participated, for varying intervals of time, in this

unique adventure in education. 156 inmates were attending classes at the conclusion of the program. The distribution of inmates, in reference to time spent in school, is presented in Tables 3 and 4. The major purpose of this evaluation is to present a survey and interpretation of the educational growth resulting from instruction with the Laubach Literacy Course of Study.

TABLE 3 presents a comprehensive survey of the group educational progress resulting from an organized program consisting of filmed instruction and classroom teaching in literacy education. The grade scores are derived from the administration of the Stanford Educational Achievement Test. During the classroom exercises the students used text-workbooks which correlated with the instruction on films. The students were tested before attending classes (see Orientation Achievement Grade Average) in order to ascertain their educational achievement status. All enrolees were tested at the conclusion of 12 weeks of instruction. At the end of the course, which required 16 weeks of organised instruction, the enrolees were administered the third educational achievement test (See Retest Grade Average).

The students were grouped on the basis of time spent in the classroom study, and the average educational grade achievement was determined for each of the six groups which include all students who were enroled during the 4 to 16 week intervals. The average educational increment of the 108 students who completed the 16 weeks of instruction was 2.5 grades (see Average Grade Increment). This increment has been previously referred to as being phenomenal.

The educational increments are based upon the presentation of instruction films and classroom teaching. It is the opinion of the writer that filmed presentation without teacher instruction is of small value. The limited degree of educational increment in terms of time spent in film presentation as reported in the Alabama study, supports this view. For best results, classroom instruction is of prime importance.

In the event there are some who assume the attitude of the skeptic, and immediately take up residence in Missouri, it seems prudent to mention the research of an educational project which was conducted in much the same manner in Chicago.

A class of retarded readers were given remedial reading instruction which consisted of 30 lessons (each lesson a half hour long). These children were not geniuses. All of them were poor readers, and were described as possessing only average intelligence. Those conducting the remedial class instruction reported that:

Every child in the test showed improvement. On the average, each child gained a full year's grade in oral reading skill and his spelling improved at the same time.

**TABLE 3**

A total summary of Average Educational Grade Achievement

Number of Weeks	Number of Cases	Educational Achievement Orientation Grade Average	Educational Achievement Retest Grade Average	Educational Achievement Average Grade Increment*
16	108	2.0	4.5	2.5
12	119	1.9	4.2	2.3
10	15	2.3	4.8	2.5
8	19	2.4	4.2	1.8
6	7	2.5	4.3	1.8
4	20	2.6	4.3	1.7
Total	288	Average 2.3	Average 4.4	Average 2.1

\* Stanford Achievement Test (1953), Advanced Battery, Form 3, Partial.

**TABLE 4**

A comparative study of Average Educational Achievement in Reading, Vocabulary Development, and Spelling in terms of Differentiated Intervals of Instruction.

Number of Weeks	Number of Cases	Reading Grade	Vocabulary Grade	Spelling Grade	Total Grade	Orientation Grade	Grade Increment.
16	108	4.1	5.1	4.3	4.5	2.0	2.5
12	119	3.7	4.8	4.1	4.2	1.9	2.3
10	15	4.4	5.2	4.8	4.8	2.3	2.5
8	19	3.7	4.7	4.2	4.2	2.4	1.8
6	7	4.2	4.6	4.2	4.3	2.5	1.8
4	20	4.2	4.6	4.0	4.3	2.6	1.7
Total	288						
	Average	4.0	4.8	4.8	4.4	2.3	2.1

Table 4 is a presentation of the subject matter areas in which the students were tested for the purposes of ascertaining educational accomplishments. According to the presentation of data, the greatest gains were consistently registered in vocabulary development, with spelling in second place. The educational achievement grade increment, as would be normally expected, progressively increased in relation to the time spent in classroom instruction. In one instance only, was this not the case. Generally speaking, expectations were translated into factual accomplishments. There is reason to believe that by extending the number of weeks for filmed presentation and classroom instruction the educational achievement gained would be consistently increased.

In order to achieve the greatest gains, in a planned program of education, the learner must be adequately motivated if he is to register programs. The source of motivation may be external to the organized program of instruction or it may be identified with the learning content. From what is currently known about the nature of the adult illiterate and his educational problem, the motivation, in this situation, comes from the internal pattern of the Laubach Literacy Course of Study. Its educational appeal is phenomenal! The learning content is designed for adult interests. The teacher's professional skill, abundance of sympathy, human kindness, and understanding patience encouraged each student to put forth his best efforts. The students liked their teacher. Needless to say educational administrators are happy when they discover that curriculum offerings are so enthusiastically received and approved by the candidates for instruction. Whenever this occurs, successful outcomes in educational adventures are assured.

The second program of instruction with the Laubacli Literacy Course of Study on Films extended through 20 weeks of alternate daily school and work assignment, beginning Nov. 1, 1960 and concluding April 1, 1961. A total of 167 students were registered for instruction. Of this number, 153 were participating at the conclusion of the filmed instruction. 14 students and their data were withdrawn from the evaluation for the following reasons:

Honor placement 7      Re-assignment 2      Mental deficiency 4      Parole 1

As indicated in Tables 5 and 6, the second research program included 5 daily class studies instead of 8. Studies in language and arithmetic were added to the former pattern which included reading, vocabulary, and spelling. The teaching of writing is a common factor to all of the studies, and is not regarded as a sixth study.

Increasing the number of daily class sessions and instructional areas, reduces the number of minutes per class for drill, review, and practice. The writer is of the opinion that a concentration, at the beginning of classes in literacy education, on 3 instead of 5 units of instruction would considerably increase the learning increment.

The average educational achievement increment of 1.66 grades for those enrolled from 15 to 20 weeks (inclusively) is most significant evidence of educational growth. More time spent, per unit of instruction, in classroom review, drill and practice exercises would result in greater increments over a longer period of program presentation. There should also be daily class instruction for each participant.

As previously stated, during the first research study there were 132 withdrawals, and during the second research program there were 14. This range in number of "leavers" needs clarification. At the time of the first program study organization, many of the enrollees were in close proximity to parole hearing dates, and many others were scheduled for honor placement classification assignment. The educational program administration was not allowed to disrupt the operation of pre-established plans. The new program had to fit into existing and ongoing activities. During the second organization for instructional purposes, the classroom enrolments were rigidly maintained. The enrollees, at this time, were comparatively recent arrivals and not in imminent danger of interrupted study because of parole or honor placement considerations.

TABLE 5

A summary of Average Educational Grade Achievement for designated groups before instruction.\*

Group Designation		November 1, 1960					Total Orientation Grade Average
Number of Weeks	Number of Cases	Reading Grade Average	Vocabulary Grade Average	Spelling Grade Average	Language Grade Average	Arithmetic Grade Average	
20	83	2.40	2.27	2.52	1.89	3.65	2.55
18	18	0.77	0.68	0.76	0.48	3.61	1.26
15	5	1.52	1.72	1.48	0.88	2.98	1.71
14	4	2.02	2.30	2.50	1.67	2.57	2.21
12	4	1.87	1.90	2.07	0.92	3.32	2.91
10	14	2.33	2.07	2.52	1.65	3.52	2.41
8	12	2.11	2.53	2.20	1.31	3.65	2.36
7	6	1.69	2.18	1.90	0.66	3.86	2.06
6	3	0.93	0.66	0.53	0.46	3.60	1.23
4	2	0.80	0.95	1.15	0.00	4.65	1.51
2	2	2.55	2.80	2.90	1.75	3.25	2.65
Total	153						
	Average	1.72	1.82	1.86	1.06	3.51	1.99

\* Metropolitan Achievement Test, Elementary Battery, Form A.

**TABLE 6**

A summary of Average Educational Grade Achievement for designate groups after instruction.\*\*

Group Designation		April 1, 1961					Total Retest Grade Average
Number of Weeks	Number of Cases	Reading Grade Average	Vocab-ulary Grade Average	Spell-ing Grade Average	Lang-uage Grade Average	Arith-metic Grade Average	
20	83	3.74	3.62	3.75	3.39	4.74	3.85
18	18	2.68	2.70	2.98	2.88	4.60	3.17
15	5	3.48	3.42	2.92	3.06	4.52	3.48
14	4	2.97	3.37	3.10	2.52	3.42	3.07
12	4	2.82	3.05	3.42	2.90	4.67	3.37
10	14	3.72	3.42	3.42	2.45	4.20	3.44
8	12	3.14	3.07	3.36	3.06	4.15	3.35
7	6	3.38	3.45	3.41	2.50	4.35	3.42
6	3	2.40	2.20	2.30	1.70	4.20	2.56
4	2	2.50	2.25	1.90	3.00	4.70	2.87
2	2	3.30	3.55	3.20	1.85	3.65	3.11
Total	153						
	Average	3.10	3.10	3.06	2.66	4.29	3.24

\*\*Metropolitan Achievement Test, Elementary Battery, Form B.

**TABLE 7**

A summary of Average Educational Achievement Grade Increment for differentiated intervals of group instruction with the Laubach Literacy Course with of Study on Films.\*\*\*

Group Designation		Average Educational Achievement Grade		
Number of Weeks	Number of Cases	Retest Grade Average	Orientation Grade Average	Increment Grade Average
20	83	3.85	2.55	1.30
18	18	3.17	1.26	1.91
15	5	3.48	1.71	1.77
14	4	3.07	2.21	0.86
12	4	3.37	2.01	1.86
10	14	3.44	2.41	1.03
8	12	3.35	2.36	0.99
7	6	3.42	2.06	1.36
6	3	2.56	1.23	1.33
4	2	2.87	1.51	1.36
2	2	3.11	2.65	0.46
Total	153			
	Average	3.24		1.25

\*\*\* Metropolitan Achievement Test, Elementary Battery, Form B

## Conclusions

1. Laubach Literacy Course of Study consists of 98 lessons, on film, each of 30 minutes duration, with correlated work-textbooks to be placed in the hands of the student; and taught by an effective, professional, and experienced teacher.
2. The Laubach Literacy Course of Study is more than an organized system of instructional data; it is more than a method, or a teaching technique; it is more than a demonstration of expert and effective teaching; it is a *total curriculum* designed to eliminate illiteracy through the acquisition of fundamental skills. It will prepare the student to achieve self-sufficiency, and self-realization, in his efforts toward educational betterment. It is the 'sine qua non' in the reconstruction of human behavior.
3. Correctional institutions need the Laubach Literacy Course of Study, on film, in order to complete the total scope of educational services and offerings. Programs and materials designed to treat the needs of adult illiterates, constitute the weakest link in the educational chain. There is a plethora of instructional data for use in intermediate, secondary, college, and specialized areas. The illiterate has been the forgotten man. This is his new deal. For him, the educational drought is now ended.
4. The Laubach Literacy Course of Study is designed for adult appeal; its motivational potential is tremendous. Its first accomplishment is to enlist the goodwill of the student. This good-will of the student, in reference to education, also transfers to other aspects of institutional living. It is interesting to note that favorable impressions concerning the teacher equaled one-third of those on the program's educational appeal; and also equaled one-third of those on the learning content. The students liked their teacher; a happy circumstance which is most necessary for success in any educational adventure.
5. The students who completed the total course (98 lessons on film, each lesson a half hour long) acquired, on the average an educational increment of 2.5 grades (from 2 to 4.5) in reading, vocabulary development, and spelling. The most spectacular (3.1) was vocabulary development. In all fairness, it should be mentioned that this pilot program was conducted under the most difficult rather than the most thoughtfully organized teaching and learning situations (see recommendations).
6. The course of study lends itself to systematic and objective evaluation. Progress can be measured. Knowledge of successful learning insured; greater activity and accomplishment on the part of the student.,
7. The course of study is a basic tool for rehabilitation enterprise. A status of illiteracy is inimical to the requirements for successful living upon release.
8. Institutions (there are many) which staff educational programs with inmate-teachers, can enhance the effectiveness of those teachers by permitting them to observe the skilled teacher at work in the Laubach Literacy Films. . The films are also excellent in-service training aids for the professionally prepared teachers.

### ***Recommendations for a Program***

1. Measure each student's educational achievement at the beginning of his enrolment in the literacy program.
2. Suggested areas for comparative educational achievement evaluation are reading, writing, vocabulary, language, spelling, and arithmetic. There are many excellent scales from which to select suitable measuring devices.



3. Conduct periodic retests for ascertaining the results of instruction at intervals of 8 weeks (more or less depending upon the length of the total program). Presenting 4 films per week would require six months to complete the course.
4. Acquaint the student with his progress.
5. Assign cell-study lessons and evaluate all effort
6. If possible, permit ownership of work-textbooks.
7. Secure adapted readers and texts for correlated instruction in citizenship, history, health, science, and arithmetic.
8. Teach the fundamental arithmetic skills (add, subtract, multiply, divide). Minimum essentials only.
9. Integrate practical learning experiences with classroom instruction (reading mail, writing letters, writing kites, use of dictionary, etc.).
10. For best results, class size should not exceed 10 to 15 students,
11. For best results, not more than 4 films should be viewed per week; 3 films would be better, especially after the first 21 films.
12. Give special recognition to each student for his participation and achievement in the Laubach Literacy Course of Study.

### ***Looking Forward***

Learning to read is important, and is made *more so* if after one learns to read there is guidance and instruction directed to the major purposes of developing reading habits, reading interests, reading attitudes, and a sense of reading discrimination.

The major problem in literacy education programs is to bridge the gap between new learning and day-to-day living. Reading and writing skills must be reflected through improved patterns of living if the educational experiences are to be meaningful and significant. If literary education is void of practical values, in terms of daily living, it becomes trick-learning, fantasy, and play-acting. Too many times, that which is learned is merely an old forgotten concept being relearned, or perhaps being re-re-learned. Mere learning, per se, is not to be confused as character reconstruction. Evidences of "trick-learning" generally are nothing more than the superficial aspects of rehabilitation.

The elimination of illiteracy through the development of reading and writing skills will not bring the expected rewards unless the newly acquired skills find expression through an established pattern of reading habits and interests.

The students in literacy education classes must do more than acquire competence in reading and related areas of learning. They must learn to enjoy reading, and acquire the habit of reading for information and pleasure. Learning to read is of no great consequence unless the learner continues to make use of the newly acquired accomplishment. The transition from a non-reader, to one who regularly reads, is the valid criterion that evaluates the importance of the total effort in literacy education.

Basic reading skills, once acquired, become sharpened, intensified, and extended through use. Conversely, reading skills quickly become dissipated through lack of use or function. The development of reading skills is a most commendable achievement for the adult who previously could not read. Through pride of achievement in reading, one becomes inspired and enabled to seek successful and satisfying experiences in other areas. The transitions from reading skill achievement to educational growth and development, and also recreational enjoyment, thru the functional application of newly acquired skills, are the major objectives of literacy education programs.

There are many adapted reading materials in citizenship, science, health and hygiene, history, and literature that are ideally designed to assist in the permanent development of reading skills, habits, and interests. The area of literature offers an excellent illustration.

The attached list of supplementary reading material, contains representative adaptations from the world's best literature that have been re-edited to meet the reading abilities of fourth, fifth, and sixth grade students. They possess high-interest appeal and low-difficulty for retarded students. The benefits to be derived by introducing these simplified texts in correlation with the instruction contained in the Laubach Literacy Course of Study may be stated as follows:

- 13.1 To stimulate and promote the development of reading interests and habits,
- 13.2 To further the consolidation and extension of reading interests and habits.
- 13.3 To provide an acquaintance with some of the world's great literature.
- 13.4 To develop an appreciation for good literature
- 13.5 To inculcate a sense of well-being and pride in the growth and development of educational accomplishment.
- 13.6 To foster and encourage the desire to own good books and eventually build the home library. Through the reading of books, the individual may acquire a cultural identification that is his rightful heritage.

The educational values and benefits derived from little journeys in the literature, citizenship, science, health, and history of our best expressed by Sir Francis Bacon to this effect:

"Reading Maketh A Full Man."

The importance of reading and writing skills and the basic significance in the reconstruction of human life and character through rehabilitation enterprise are best expressed in the following quote:

"When Blake taught the first Chinese boy the alphabet, the old system of indentured labor was doomed, because a boy who could read would sooner or later come upon some book that would give him an idea, and a boy with an idea could accomplish almost anything." [\[4\]](#)

The importance of reading and writing skills and their significance on the global frontier are best expressed by Dr. Frank C. Laubach to this effect:

"The illiterate two-thirds of the human race reach up a hand asking, ' Who will help us?' Anybody who offers to take that hand can have them, even if he lies. They are the easiest people on earth to win as friends – easy for class, equally easy for the Communists. The Communists promise to lift them, because they want to enslave them." [\[5\]](#)

### Footnotes

[1] Senator Kennedy, "Second Great Debate on TX'," October 14, 1961.

[2] Guy L. Bond and Miles A. Tinker: *Reading Difficulties, Their Diagnosis and Correction*. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc., 1957, p5.

[3] "Mass Assault," *Time Magazine*, Jan. 11, 1960

[4] James A. Michener, *Hawaii*, New York, Random House, Inc., 1959, pg.516.

[5] Dr. Frank C. Laubach, *The Delta Kappa Gamma Bulletin*, Summer edition, 1961, pg.31.

### ***Adapted Literary Readings***

Baker	Simon Bolivar
Baker	Jurez, Hero of Mexico
Berglund	Tom Sawyer
Brown	Moby Dick
Brown	The Last of the Mohicans
Brown	Huckleberry Finn
Brown	Robinson Crusoe
Bunce	Silas Marner
Bunce	Captains Courageous
Currie	Mac Beth in Modern English
Dickens	A Tale of Two Cities
Doyle	Cases of Sherlock Holmes
Dumas	The Count of Monte Cristo
Humphreville	In Other Days (15 stories)
Katterjohn	Julius Caesar in Modern English
Moderow	20,000 Leagues Under the Sea
Moderow et. al.	Treasure Island
Moderow	David Copperfield
Moderow	Around the World in Eighty Days
Munroe	The Flamingo Feather
Poe	The Gold Bug and Other Stories
Pyle	Men of Iron
Sandrus	Adventures with Animals
Sandrus	Famous Mysteries
Sandrus et. al.	Eight Treasured Stories
Sandrus et. al.	Six Great Stories
Sandrus	The Call of the Wild
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## **7. Who Will Volunteer? by Helen Bowyer.**

The Bulletin would like to organize a Reading Corps from among its subscribers and sympathizers who have the time and would enjoy contributing their service to its overworked staff. One of our pleasantest experiences has been the geniality with which editors, publishers, and outstanding writers have given us permission to reprint whatever articles we have requested. But the field from which we might garner these desiderata is far wider than we can cover by ourselves. It is not only Time, & Life, the Saturday Evening Post, the Saturday Review, Parents Magazine and other such nation-wide publications which are showing an ever deepening concern over our "reading problem" and the mortifying lag behind Russia's to which it condemns our schools. From the New York Times to the small town Sunday issue, there is scarcely a newspaper in which news items, editorials, letters from parents, teachers, child welfare agencies do not testify to a deepening misgiving as to "Why Johnny Can't Read" and "What Ivan Knows That Johnny Doesn't". The Bulletin needs to be kept informed of these writings – both for what they say and for what they leave unsaid.

For a considerable number of them, what they say is that our children's low achievement – or no achievement – in the first two R's is a fault of this egregious "Look and Say" system of teaching reading which some designing professors and administrative big-shots slipped over on the schools some 30 years ago. Mainly, it is sometimes darkly hinted, in the hope of reaping fortunes by driving from the classrooms, the still worthy successors of the good ole McGuffey Readers and substituting therefore concoctions of their own.

What practically all of them leave unsaid is that not even in the hey-day of McGuffey and his disciples did the young Americans' reading performance attain anything like the level which now perturbs us in his Soviet agemate. And which ought to perturb us in his Spanish-American counterpart wherever school conditions are at all comparable to ours. It did not attain this level for the simple reason that it could not. There is no method known to man, call it phonic, alphabetic or what you will, by which the primary moppet can as easily learn to read, write and spell in our erratic, inconsistent spelling as he could if it were spelled as regularly as, say, Czech, Finnish, or Italian. It is just in the dependability, predictability, logic and analogy in the spelling of these tongues that lies the ease with which their reading can be learned. It is here that the secret of what seems to us phenomenal attainment is to be found.

The reading service for which we are asking might concern itself among other things with this "golden ageing" of our phonic past. Some of our most outstanding weeklies and monthlies have been going in rather heavily for articles which call for debunking in this respect. But the first requirement of this debunking is speedy information as to when and where these articles appeared. Have we, among our readers, a dozen or so who would assume the responsibility of keeping tab on one or more of these major publications and notifying us promptly, with clippings, of anything which might be grist for our mill?

As for the education press, there are some dozen monthlies and quarterlies which might well reward regular scrutiny – several of them put out by universities or professional societies or fraternities. As for the journals made (ostensibly) for the mere classroom teacher, they are so wedded to Look and Say, they haul back with the nearest skillet against the heretic who gives too great a role to even "intrinsic phonics" in ferreting out the pronunciation of words. But they are concerned with apathy, restlessness, emotional disturbances in the first and second grades, disorderly conduct, truancy, and juvenile delinquency from there on. To say nothing of the mounting window-smashing and other such manifestations of pupil hostility against the schools whose reading, spelling and writing makes dumbbells out of them. The straws at which some of these journals grasp in their erudite efforts to explain and exorcise these chain reactions to our chaotic spelling, will make incredible reading in our phonemic future and the Bulletin would like to begin a compilation of them now.

In volunteering your services, it might be well to suggest which publications you would be willing to watch, in order that we may cover without duplication, as much of the press as possible. Are you with us?

H. B.

[*Spelling Progress Bulletin October 1962 pp21–23 in the printed version*]  
(For #41 and #5, see characters on Table 1.)

## **8. "#41 b#5 or not to be" by John Downing. far from adequately reviewed by Helen Bowyer.**

For the sub-title *The Augmented Roman Alphabet* on the cover of the book, will the reader mentally substitute *The Pitman Initial Teaching Alphabet*. By this new name for his 43 character system, Sir James Pitman hopes to clear up the existing misconception of its purpose, and that of the big infant school project, of which he is the prime mover. As Mr. Downing puts it on page 75, it is not intended to be even "the thin edge of the wedge of spelling reform." Its sole purpose is to simplify spelling during the two years of Infants' School that the child will get the vocabulary, the love of reading, the background of knowledge and the training of his mind which will enable him to make an easy transition to conventional orthography when, at about the age of 7, he passes into Junior School.

But the book went to press before the name *Augmented Roman Alphabet* was dropped, so in this little dissertation of it, we will stick to its erstwhile abbreviation A.R.

The experiment which was to test its efficiency started Sept. 1961, with 600 four and five-year-olds enrolled in 23 well diversified schools. It had been in operation only the time between then and the Christmas holidays, when Mr. Downing gathered the impressions of it which he incorporated in his book. Most teachers were naturally still cautious as to what effect the new medium was having on the children's "reading and writing." But the Director of Education for one large north country borough put himself on record to this extent: "The general story all around is one of faster progress. In schools where the teacher's method brings in phonic word building, earlier progress its most marked. Single cases prove nothing, but there was one very bright child of five who, having finished the first primer of Janet and John, went to the bookcase, and without stopping, read through the six books appropriate to that stage. The Headmistress was quite startled. Being cautious, she said, "Of course, the child may be exceptionally bright, but the fact is, that in thirty years of teaching, I have never seen this happen before."

But the *Augmented Roman Alphabet*, the official organ of the Project, which is published by Mr. Downing, continues this matter of reading where the book leaves off, Condensing the "subjective report" of Sir James of his tour of all of the schools participating in the experiment, the July issue quotes him thus: "The volume of reading consumed in A.R. is astonishing. There are now some 200 titles but we have never yet been ahead of the more voracious readers..... More and more books are being produced, but the sky is the limit."

"The vocabulary of the children seems to have increased greatly. Ease of reading seems to have released more of the child's capacity for the non-mechanical aspects of reading.... Comprehension and enjoyment become easier and more important. The children appreciate the silent communication. The author has told them stories, given them information, and thereby developed their receptive ability. This is later matched by development of their emissive ability, as noticeable in their chattiness and in their creative writing."

"Many of the children come from homes where the parents do not tell stories or speak about interesting facts. It is particularly important to put such children in a two way communication in which the author and the reader act as the parent would in the best homes."

But while, at the time of its writing, Mr. Downing's book could comment only tentatively on the effect of A.R. on the 600 four and five-year olds in the Infants Schools, there were 14 seven year-

olds on whom something quite definite could be reported. They had passed through Infants School and been admitted to Junior so disastrously retarded in reading that only three of the fourteen could get so much as five words on the *Burt Graded Reading Test* and two of them could not get even one.

In October, they were divided into two experimental groups. E-1 comprised the brighter seven – mean I.Q. 99 and E-2 the less bright with a mean of 83.

Four mornings a week, each group was taken out of class for a half hour's reading instruction with the A.R. system. Their teacher was an experienced remedial specialist who had taken the training course in this medium offered by the London University Institute of Education. He started them on a transliteration of a very popular Infants School series, but so rapid was their progress that in four weeks - that is to say, a total of eight hours of teaching – he was able to introduce A.R. material of greater difficulty and of higher interest to 7 year olds.

He had commenced with the *Look and Say* approach, but found that the children themselves were reporting to phonic analysis and he quickly took advantage of this development. At the end of another four weeks – that is, of a total of 16 hours of special instruction – these erst-while reading failures had attained a fluency in A.R. reading on a level of difficulty with the conventional material for 7 year olds.

Apart from these four half-hours a week, all fourteen of the children spent all their school day in their regular classroom. In their free reading periods there, they had access to A.R. reading material, but otherwise they followed the regular class program. Their class teacher reported a significant change in their attitude. They seemed much more confident, their oral expression had improved, and some behavior difficulties had disappeared. And, contrary to her initial fears, there seemed to be no confusion in their minds caused by reading A.R. for remedial work and conventional spelling for their other school activities.

At the same time remedial teaching began with these 14 children, it began also with 20 other seven-year-old reading failures drawn from three different schools in the same town. They were divided: into control groups, C-1, C-2 and C-3. Their mean I.Q.'s were higher than those of the two Experimental Groups – 108, 100 and 84 respectively. But their beginning reading scores were little different – two of the 20 could manage 6 words on the Burt Test, but four, none at all.

These control groups were given precisely the same treatment as E-1 and E-2, except that theirs was carried on in conventional spelling. At the end of the eighth week all five groups were given another Burt Test – with this dramatic showing. E-1 and E-2 came through with mean scores of 27.6 and 27.9, leaving C-1, C-2 and C-3 way behind with 12.5, 12.7 and 9.8 respectively.

"It is interesting," Mr. Downing writes, "to note that the dull children on A.R. scored as well as the brighter children. In fact, a child with a very low intelligence score (I.Q. 81) achieved the highest score in the reading test – 41 words. The reading teacher found, that, given time, the duller pupils could analyse quite difficult words. "These results," he continues, "seem to show that the traditional alphabet and spelling of English have been a barrier for this particular group of backward readers, which prevented their making a start in learning to read.

"But, so far, it has only been shown that this particular group found A.R. easier to read than traditional print. What about the transition from A. R. to normal books? Would "unlearning and relearning" put these children back to the beginning, as some sceptics have predicted?

"In the ninth week, the seven pupils of E-1 (the higher ability experimental group) were given a set



of Junior School reading books in traditional print. They read the first book without prompting except in the case of capital letters, [1] and the second book also was found to present very little difficulty. The third book was completed with fluency and understanding. All this was achieved in two hours of teaching time after setting aside the A.R. books. The less able group moved a little more slowly but they, too, seemed to have experienced little difficulty with the first two books, and the third was being attempted quite adequately after two hours of teaching.

"Back in their own classroom, these children who have learned to read through A.R. are reported to be very independent when reading the traditional text... and they have proved their ability to cope with the class library and to obtain enjoyment and information from it.

"Although," Mr. Downing concludes, "they do not permit a final judgement on A.R.'s effectiveness in general, the findings of this small experiment on backward readers are encouraging, and teachers' appetites have been whetted for more results."

They are to get them. The July issue of the *Augmented Roeman Nuez* contained a long list of schools which then intended to conduct similar experiments with their reading retardees.

-o0o-

[1] When capitals are used in A.R., they are simply somewhat larger configurations of lower case letters. In the *Augmented Roeman Nuez*, they are rarely used at all. A period and a noticeable space, mark the end of one sentence and the beginning of another.

Here, copied from page 16 of Mr. Downing's book is the table of Sir James' 43 characters, now to be known as the *pitman initial teaching alphabet*. Also is shown table A & B, giving the scores of the five groups in the remedial teaching experiment.

TABLE A. HIGHER I.Q. GROUPS

Group	<i>A.R. spelling</i>							<i>Traditional spelling</i>													
	E1							C1							C3						
Mean I.Q.	99							108							100						
Pupil no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	
I	5	3	2	5	3	3	3	4	4	5	0	6	2	0	4	4	0	3	6	3	
II	27	31	20	30	25	24	36	13	17	18	4	19	4	4	11	10	5	18	10	7	
III	3.4							3.5							2.9						
IV	27.6							12.5							9.3						

TABLE B. LOWER I.Q. GROUPS

Group	<i>A.R. spelling</i>							<i>Traditional spelling</i>						
	E2							C2						
Mean I.Q.	83							84						
Pupil no.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
I	2	2	5	0	0	2	3	3	2	3	0	0	5	3
II	12	25	41	35	27	25	30	20	5	23	3	2	25	11
III	2.0							2.3						
IV	27.9							12.7						

I = No. of words read on Burt Test before remedial teaching.

II = No. of words read on Burt Test after 16 hours' remedial teaching.

III = Mean no. of words before remedial teaching.

IV = Mean no. of words after 16 hours' remedial teaching.

tə bee or not to be

The following table shows the forty-three characters of A.R. and their phonemic values.

TABLE II  
THE AUGMENTED ROMAN ALPHABET

<i>Number</i>	<i>Character</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Example</i>	<i>Traditional spelling</i>
1	æ	ae	ræt	rate
2	b	bee	big	big
3	c	kee	cat	cat
4	d	dee	dog	dog
5	ee	ee	seet	seat
6	f	ef	fill	fill
7	g	gae	gun	gun
8	h	hae	hat	hat
9	ie	ie	ieland	island
10	j	jae	jieant	giant
11	k	kae	kit	kit
12	l	el	lamp	lamp
13	m	em	man	man
14	n	en	net	net
15	œ	oe	bœt	boat
16	p	pee	pig	pig
17	r	rae	run	run
18	s	ess	sad	sad
19	t	tee	tap	tap
20	ue	ue	fue	few
21	v	vee	van	van
22	w	wae	will	will
23	y	i-ae	yell	yell
24	z	zed or zee	fizz	fizz
25	x	zess	houses	houses
26	wh	whae	when	when
27	ch	chae	chick	chick
28	gh	ith	ghaut	thought
29	rh	thee	rhe	the
30	sh	ish	shperd	shepherd
31	ʒ	zhee	judʒ	judge
32	ŋ	ing	siŋ	sing
33	ɑ	ah	far	far
34	au	au	aut	ought
35	a	at	appl	apple
36	e	et	egg	egg
37	i	it	dip	dip
38	o	ot	hot	hot
39	u	ut	ugly	ugly
40	oo	oot	book	book
41	oo	oo	mooon	moon
42	ou	ow	bou	bough
43	oi	oi	toi	toy

## 9. Over There!

Dear Mr. Tune:

What is the matter with our educational leadership here in America, that in the vital matter of rational spelling for our primary children, that we have to be missionaried from England? If not, indeed, from Siberia! You noticed, didn't you, in the April number of the *Augmented Roeman Nuez*, that in Irkutsh, a city of 100,000 near the border of Outer Mongolia, a Mr. Kolesovsky has been using A.R. to teach English as a foreign language to a class of six to eight year-olds. Lucky little beggars! With the like of *bite*, *write*, *height* – *horse*, *source*, *worse*, magicked into *biet*, *riet*, *heit* – *hors*, *sors*, *wurs*, they will soon be beating *our* own youngsters at reading our mother tongue, as well as their own.

As far as I've heard to date, no missionary band is leaving Siberia to bring the gospel with teachable and easily learnable spelling to our shores. But from your latest, I gather that very shortly one such will be landing from England. What it will witness to is the unheard-of reading attainment of some 600 five and six-year-olds now auspiciously progressing through their second school year of "reeding and rieting" with the A.R. alphabet, and some 1200 four and five-year-olds auspiciously started on the first year of it. Among the schools participating in the big project is our own U.S. Air Force School at Bushby Park, Teddingham. If to me it seems a bit ironic that to get a decent chance "too lurn to reed" their native language, our small compatriots had to see to it that their daddies were Air Force personnel stationed in England, I join you all the more in congratulating them on their luck.

They don't realize it, of course, those small Yanks, that they may be making history for their motherland. History in the shattering of her reading problem, that Moloch to which, every September, every February, we offer up a new two million of our six-year-olds. Offer them in the full awareness – statistical awareness – of the unhappiness, mental disturbance, juvenile delinquency to which we are dooming tens of thousands of them. Has it yet ocured to our N.E.A., our C.B.E. or any other of our prominent educational organizations that these small Yanks over there may be pointing the way to an end of the sacrifice over here?

Don't remind me how utterly Helena Bonnema's World English project with 40 kindergarteners the whole school year 1960-61 was wasted on them – and, indeed, on almost every other organ of our school leadership. She didn't have back of her, the prestige, mind, and drive of the Sir James Pitman, a London University, a National Education Research Foundation or any such roster of eminence in education, publishing, public affairs as the English project started out with. But I list those 40 small Denverites of hers along with their agemate compatriots overseas as the avant-garde of a greatly happier future about to sunrise on our schools. Have you taken steps to archive the names, parentage, etc. of both groups, against the time when, in the light of its genial rays, the history of our present blind, pettifogging dealings with our Reading Problem comes to be written?

Yours in high hopes – and why not?

E. E. Arctier.

*[Spelling Reform Anthology §13.6 p188 in the printed version]*  
*[Spelling Progress Bulletin October 1962 p24 in the printed version]*

## **10. Overcoming the Difficulties of the Printed Word, by Sir Cyril Burt, F.B.A.\***

\*Sir Cyril Burt, F.B.A., Emeritus Prof. of Psychology, University of London.

Reading is by far the most important subject that the young child learns at school. It is also the most difficult to teach. English in its orthography is more erratic and irregular than any other contemporary language; that is the price we pay for its composite origin – a feature to which so much of its richness and flexibility is due. Moreover, in spite of all the work on eye-movements, speech-habits, brain-centres, and the like, we still do not know what goes on in the brain or mind of the practised reader, nor what are the actual processes by which the beginner first learns to gather meaning from the printed page. As a result the problem of the best 'reading method', as the training colleges call it, has been a scholastic battleground for generations – 'a field strewn with lost causes and littered with exploded ideas'. Any scientific investigation into the underlying problems, therefore, is to be heartily welcomed.

The experiments which Mr. Downing describes in this book are being conducted jointly by the Institute of Education of the University of London, and the National Foundation for Educational Research. Mr. Downing himself was selected as chief investigator because of his exceptional qualifications for this type of work. The particular aspect with which his present research is concerned is one that has evoked much discussion and many alternative proposals, but as yet has been subjected to practically no adequate investigation – namely, the way the English language is customarily printed. Mr. Downing's tentative solution is to substitute a new augmented alphabet, devised by Sir James Pitman; and part of the object of this book is to describe the alphabet and explain its extra merits.

There is, however, one question that his experimental scheme nearly always provokes: why all this elaboration – a hundred different schools, refresher courses for teachers, preliminary matching of control groups, and a formidable statistical analysis at the end? The answer is – the unexpected multiplicity of the factors involved.

To begin with, boys and girls have their oddities just as much as do words. Owing to the differences in their mental make-up and home backgrounds, different children approach the task of reading in very different ways. One child is harassed by specific difficulties which cause no trouble to another. This is a point that has been all too often overlooked in previous discussions and researches; and it is largely for this reason that they have so often proved inconclusive. Most of us realize that a child with an uncorrected defect of sight or hearing, with a low I.Q., or a weak mechanical memory, is badly handicapped. But the really important disabilities are far more elusive. Some youngsters, for example, do practically all their thinking in terms of visual pictures, and are extremely poor in both auditory and kinaesthetic imagery; teach them by a phonic method, and they fail completely; change to 'look-and-say', and many of them quickly catch up. Others have little or no visual imagery: they have to learn from what the teacher calls the 'sounds'. But are these sounds those heard in the mind's ear or those uttered, so to speak, by mental lips? These are some of the incidental problems to which previous investigators have paid little or no attention. Frequently, however, the difficulty is not intellectual, but emotional. The child's first attempts at reading may have been so persistently frustrated by some unrecognized obstruction – an ill-chosen method or an unsuitable type of reading material – that as a result he suffers a kind of mental block, and the very sight of print induces stage-fright.

But of all the innumerable influences, by far the most important is undoubtedly the teacher himself.

A teacher who has a keen and earnest belief in the method he is trying out will nearly always achieve good results; one who has no faith in it, or little interest in the problem, is almost bound to fail. Here, no doubt, is a partial explanation of the puzzling fact that, no matter how diverse the procedures used, nearly every enthusiastic investigator is able to report success with the particular method he himself is prepared to champion.

It is this plurality of intermingling factors which forms the real difficulty that besets almost every educational research of the type Mr. Downing is carrying out. It is this that has stultified most of the earlier investigations. An obvious expedient is to arrange, so far as is possible, for one factor only to vary at a time, and to keep the others constant. That is the plan Mr. Downing has adopted. And here lie the reasons for the numerous precautions which he has very wisely taken.

What will be the final outcome it would be rash to predict. Almost invariably in a scientific investigation, when one sets out to confirm or confute some plausible theory, the result is seldom the plain straightforward 'Yes' or 'No' that cross-examining counsel love to demand. Usually it appears that there are elements of truth in both the opposing views; and more often than not the most rewarding results are the discoveries made by the way. Fresh problems, quite unforeseen, nearly always emerge; new facts, quite unsuspected, are vividly brought to light. Thus, even supposing that these novel proposals turn out, on the whole, to be more effective than any of the earlier ones, it still would not follow that they are the best that could be devised. Some educational reformers – themselves frequently teachers of considerable experience – favour an alternative type of 'rational orthography' or 'systematized notation' such as the International Phonetic Alphabet, the Modified Spelling advocated by the British Simplified Spelling Society, or the 'Regularized English' proposed by Dr. Axel Wijk. Many of the criticisms which the proposals have already elicited will suggest points deserving special attention. Are the new composite characters, like  $\int h$  for *sh* and  $\eta$  for *ng*, really easier than the traditional digraphs? Is the system equally helpful to the bright, the dull, and those of average ability? Is the child to continue using the new alphabet and the modified spelling when he himself starts writing? If so, will not this new notation prevent him from mastering the conventional orthography when he comes to write letters or compositions of his own? And, as he changes to the ordinary textbook, or tries to read books that he finds at home or in the public library, will he not have to unlearn this artificial method before he can understand the traditional style? Finally at what age should the transition be made, and what is the best method of carrying it out?

Most of the critics base their conclusions on *a priori* arguments rather than on systematically planned experiments; yet few will be satisfied until their claims also have been put to a practical test. Here therefore is the teacher's chance. The sceptic should be as eager as the enthusiastic advocate to make an actual trial. Even if from all these investigations nothing of any obvious practical value should after all emerge, nevertheless, if scientifically conducted, they will at least throw fresh light on the mental processes of the young learner. And the encouraging results already achieved by Mr. Downing are sufficient to show that a series of inquiries planned along these lines are well worth while.

Science is essentially progressive. Each new theory, when duly verified, marks an advance on the last; but it is never final. Medicine and surgery have made astonishing strides during the last half-century, largely owing to the way in which practising physicians and surgeons have themselves undertaken first-hand research. Teaching might similarly become increasingly efficient if teachers themselves would also engage or assist in educational research. Here then, thanks to the generosity of private and public benefactors, is a magnificent chance to take part in one valuable investigation. May we hope that, not only psychologists and educationists, but also teachers, school inspectors, and school doctors will lend a helping hand, and that both parents and education officials will accord their ready support.

*[Spelling Reform Anthology §2.11 p35 in the printed version]*  
*[Spelling Progress Bulletin October 1962 p25 in the printed version]*

## **11. Upton Sinclair Cites Need For Spelling Reform In Letter To President Kennedy**

Upton Sinclair, famous magazine writer, author of books and publisher, strongly favors reformed spelling. He has asked President Kennedy to help this cause in a very fine and strongly worded letter.

It was written by Mr. Sinclair without his knowing that a bill was in congress for the creation of a National Spelling Commission. He expresses the same idea however, and has written Homer W. Wood that he is in favor of the present procedure as expressed in the bill.

The letter follows:

A Letter to the President  
President John F. Kennedy  
The White House  
Washington 25, D.C.

My Dear Mr. President:

I know that I am addressing the busiest man in the land; but a year or so ago you were kind enough to write me a gracious letter, saying that you had read some of my books; so I am venturing to hope that this letter may come under your eyes. It deals with a subject of vast importance, one which may affect our human condition for centuries to come. I will make my statement brief.

During my sixty-eight years as a professional writer – beginning at age fifteen – I have had to do with the spelling of the English language. I have learned it reasonably well, so my trouble is not a personal one; but as a man of humane feelings I think of the millions of children who come into our primary schools every year, as well as the tens of millions of foreigners who wish to adopt our language and make it into a world language. It is, of course, of the greatest interest to us that they should do it; but the chaos of our spelling makes the task one of unimaginable difficulty. No one can figure how large a portion of time and study of both children and foreigners is wasted on this futility; but half the study time would be a reasonable guess. This means that simplified and systematized spelling would make the learning of our language twice as easy as it is, and so twice as useful to the world. .

You and I have possessed the English-American language almost from infancy, and we take its spelling as a matter of course. It requires a definite effort for us to look back upon our early blunders and gropings in this jungle of inconsistencies. We were told that they were our fault; but more often than not they were the fault of our "mother tongue." The multiplicity and absurdity of these faults would take a volume to list . . .

I have in my mind one sentence – I cannot recall whether I read it somewhere or made it up myself. It contains five words which are spelled with the same endings, but the endings are pronounced differently: "A rough cough and a hiccough plough me through." So there are five different ways you can read the sentence, and you can throw any company into "stitches" by reciting: "A ruff cuff and a hiccuff pluff me thruff," or "A roo coo and a hiccoo ploo me throo," and so on. But to a foreigner these problems are not funny; he finds it hopeless to disentangle them, and may give up in disgust and go home to his native tongue. But your grandchildren and my great grandchildren cannot do that; they have to learn thousands of exceptions to spelling rules, and all their lives have to know that if they slip up with a written or spoken word, they will be taken for illiterate. Their task is harder than the foreigner's; we make allowances for him.

What I invite you to do will require very little of your time, and will immortalize your name as much as if you had written the Declaration of Independence. Select a group of scholars who have studied the problems of spelling reform and have advocated it, give them a staff and the necessary funds, and commission them to lay out a program for a minimum reform of orthography within a reasonable time. There will follow, of course, world-wide discussion and controversy, which is all to the good, for it is the process of preparing the public mind for a world- wide change. When the commission submits its program, put it into effect in public printing, and in your own and other official statements, the newspapers cannot refuse to print them; and a bit later they will have to follow the new ways. It will not be long before the public gets over the shock, and realizes the night- mare from which it has been wakened.

There is nobody in the land who can do this job but you, Mr. President; and there is little chance that you could do anything else that will give such benefit to the human race. It is clear that English may become the future international language; and nothing can stand in the way but the fantastic absurdities, the chaos and disorder, which have come down to us from the ignorance of the past centuries in which our language was formed.

That is all; except to offer my sincere congratulation upon the courage and hope which you have so far given to the people of our land.

Sincerely,  
Upton Sinclair

## **12. If You Have Tears.... reported by Samuel C. Seegay.**

Many people know that I have been interested, engaged, involved and entangled for some 25 years in the almost hopeless and generally frowned upon task of trying to revise the English alphabet and orthography, I have composed and compiled a thousand arguments for its ultimate acceptance. I have utilized analysis, logic, humor, forensics, I have tried to arouse the sympathetic, to stir the phlegmatic, to abuse the scoffer, to browbeat the antagonist. During all this, I have ever been on the search for some moving, some culminating idea that might lead to a decisive measure of success in proselitism for this humane cause.

Yesterday, I found it... so, prepare to shed them now!

I called on my old friend Izzy – a real gentleman of the old school. He was graduated from a leading Eastern University; for over 40 years he not only established an enviable reputation as an outstanding, conscientious, devoted and gifted teacher of English, he also contributed innumerable timely and worthy articles in our leading educational publications. Needless to say, Izzy was a voracious reader; not merely because the habit was firmly established, not merely because it was part and parcel of his professional career, but because of an insatiable appetite and a most gratifying delight in this greatest and most enduring of all mortal indulgences.

Last January, Izzy suffered a stroke. After the usual hospitalization, the ensuing period of convalescence, the gradual re-entry into some semblance of a routine of daily living, Izzy had not fully regained his power of speech. He suffered some other losses too, such as a lack of complete coordination of muscular activity, a concomitant slackening of motion, of ambulation. But none of these mattered to Izzy. The only thing he grievously misses is – you know what – reading. His days lack luster, time hangs heavy, an engulfing void has robbed him of his most valued, his most cherished preoccupation.

Sure, he took a course in speech therapy and succeeded to a comparatively satisfactory degree. Yes, he has received muscular therapy and is very, grateful for his progress, such as it is, but he is far from contented with his lack of accomplishment in his efforts to relearn to read. Listen to his own words.

"Somehow, I can't get the right words together to fully express myself, I grasp and I grope to make myself clear when speaking the correct words seem to have escaped me, But I have absolutely no difficulty in recognizing these very words when they are spoken to me. As the words reach my ears I suddenly recall them like old and steady friends, both individually and in their proper context for comprehension.

"With this fortunate happenstance, I naturally felt that the printed word would have the same effect, would be just as familiar to me once I saw it, But no, it doesn't work that way at all. Once more I know the letters of the alphabet. I can even recite the alphabet in its proper terminology and in sequence. However, as I look at the printed word, I see it only as an assemblage of its letters. I try to sound the letters to make a word, but the result is unfamiliar and cryptic, conveying no sense. As a consequence, there is little comprehension of the phrase, of the sentence, so that I am forced to ponder, and struggle with that blocking word, Sometimes I find myself re-reading a phrase a dozen times; often I drop the book in utter defeat.

"After a lifetime of intellectual pursuit, I find myself in the same position as the third or fourth grade child who suddenly begins to hate school, to wriggle and squirm in the classroom, to resist



and rebel from the tasks and regimen of learning.

"In contradistinction to this abysmal state and burden, I have done much better with figures. Except for an occasional lapse, I can usually do what sums are required of me. I am especially happy that I can handle money – I have even managed to reconcile a monthly bank statement! As an impromptu experiment with some intimate friends I successfully solved several problems in Algebra.

"These were and are great accomplishments for me. Because of them, I have not abandoned the hope of regaining my reading ability, As I sit and gaze out of my window, I frequently find myself longing for the day when I will be able to finish even one complete incident in a chapter of a printed work."

Friends, wipe your tears away and resolve to fight even harder for the greatest of all gifts to mankind: a strictly phonetic alphabet and orthography for all children, whether gifted or retarded, and even for those in what really amounts to their second childhood.

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*[Spelling Progress Bulletin October 1962 p26 in the printed version]*

### **13. Pitman and Downing to Tour America**

'The forthcoming tour of America by Sir James Pitman, publisher and Member of Parliament, and John Downing, Reading Research Officer of the Univ. of London, Institute of Education, which originally encompassed a half dozen Universities and Colleges, has had to be expanded due to the greater interest shown than at first expected. They will give lectures on the results so far shown in the experimental teaching project using the Augmented Roman Alphabet. Because the name A.R.A. did not convey the true intent of this teaching tool, its name is being changed to The Pitman Initial Teaching Alphabet.

A detailed schedule of their trip was not available at the time the Bulletin went to press. However, here is the schedule of the cities at which they are giving lectures and conferences. Further details may be had from Dr. Ben D. Wood, Director of Educational Research, Columbia College, New York.

Nov.1-7, in and around New York City  
Nov. 8-9, Greater Cleveland Educational Research Council. Cleveland, Ohio  
Nov. 10, Lehigh Univ., Bethlehem, Pa,  
Nov. 13-14, Harvard Univ., Cambridge, Mass.  
Nov. 15-16, Office of Education, Washington, DC.  
Nov. 19-20, Detroit and Ann Arbor, Mich.  
Nov. 21-24, Chicago, Ill,  
Nov. 26-27, Son Francisco and Bay area.  
Nov. 28, Los Angeles, Univ. of So. Calif.  
Nov, 29, Los Angeles, Univ. of Calif. at LA,  
Nov. 30, Yale Univ., New Haven Conn.

Other conferences are being scheduled as time permits. See your local college for details, Dr. Edward Fry, Director Reading Clinic, Loyola College, is making the arrangements for the Los Angeles area.

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*[Spelling Progress Bulletin October 1962 p27 in the printed version]*

## 14. On English Pronunciation, Say Now "Shibboleth", by Clarence Hotson, Ph.D.

Write "Menziēs" and "Ming-gus" construe it,  
And into your memory glue it;  
    And every true Scot –  
    Believe it or not –  
Will tell you that's how they do it.

Ryt "Menziēs" and "Ming-gus" kunstru it,  
And intū yur memori glu it;  
    And evri tru Scot –  
    Beleev it or not –  
Wil tel yu that's how tha du it.

Pronouncing the great name of Menziēs  
(Ming gus)  
In frenziēs of wonder will fling us;  
    To sound as we spell  
    Is all very well,  
But where will the principle bring us?

Pronounsing th grait naim uv Menziēs  
(Ming gus)  
In frenzeez uv wunder wil fling us;  
    Tu sound az we spel  
    Iz aul vari wel,  
But hwaer wil th prinsipl bring us?

Less non-readers, truants, or J. D.'s?  
Or pool hall artists shooting the breeze?  
    Assuming it will do it  
    How will you pursue it?  
If archaic spelling we can't unfreeze?

Les non-reedrēz, truants, or J. D.'z?  
Or pool haul artists shooting th breez?  
    Asuming it wil do it,  
    How wil yu persu it?  
If arkai-ik spelēg we cant unfreez?

There was a young student named Leicester  
Whom mangling his name used to pester.  
    "If my brain were as lame  
    As those writing my name,  
I'd flunk every course this semester."

Thaer wuz a yung student naimd Lester  
Hoom mangling hiz naim iust tu pester.  
    "If my brain wer az laim  
    Az thoaz ryting my naim,  
I'd flunk evri kors this semester. "

Dr. Hotson, Romulus, N. Y.

**Editor's note:** It has become the policy of the Bulletin not to publish demonstrations of personal synthetic alphabets as such, but in this case, we were so caught by the gayety of the medium, that the demonstration was allowed to slip past our guard.

Besides, there is one or two points on which the editors would welcome a discussion: the use of the simple digraph – th for the definite article before a consonant, and the use of r for the unstrest er in readers, and the use of a for two different sounds.

### 15. And now Professor O. Howe Erudight.

I join with you, my dear P. Dantick,  
In your war on all these frantic  
Screwballs who'd degrade our spelling  
A la "kolej, noleg, kweling."  
What's their mere consistency  
Compared with etymology?  
Can you call it education  
If Johnny doesn't learn that "nation"  
Comes to him from classic Rome,  
With Athens pedigree-ing "nome"?

Science has its place, no doubt,  
If there's time for it without  
Scanting drill on p in "psalm",  
H in "ghost" and l in "palm",  
The final e in "choose" and "booze",  
The b in "doubt", oe in "shoes".  
And other dear anomalies  
In what Shaw dubbed our "Johnsonese".

Shaw, indeed! And what degree  
Commensurate with our Ph.D.  
Had he – to justify his meddling  
With orthography? His riddling,  
His wisecrack "photi" out of "fish"?  
Ah ... had I but had my wish.

What though Turkey overthrew  
The spelling that her fathers knew,  
And by the very next September  
(Nineteen-twenty-nine, Remember?)  
Had all her school enrollment reading  
In an alphabet exceeding  
The regularity e'en of Russia's  
Finland's, Italy's and Prussia's –  
Let her. Chacun à son gout.  
P. Dantick, friend, I stand with you.

I stand for long accepted use,  
For limb and climb, for juice and goose,  
For vein and reign, demesne and seine,  
For campaign, champagne, window-pane,  
For firm and worm, for fizz and quiz,  
In short for spelling as it is.  
What's good enough for me and you,  
Is good enough for Johnny, too.

Helen Bowyer, Los Angeles, Calif.

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### 16. Granmaa'z Praer

Mie luv haz floen,  
Hee dun mee durt.  
Ie did not noe hee woz a flurt.  
Too yoo, unskoold, mae Hevn forbid  
Too bee dun az Ie woz did.

The key is World English, whose long vowels ae, ee, ie, oe, ue, are pronounced  
as in Mae, see, tie, toe, Tuesday.

Lillian Winters.