Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1977

Dedicated to finding the causes of difficulties in learning reading and spelling.

Winter, 1977

Publisht quarterly	Editor and General Manager,	Assistant Editor,
Spring, Summer. Fall, Winter	Newell W. Tune,	Helen Bonnema Bisgard.
Subscription $3.00 a year.	5848 Alcove Ave,	13618 E. Bethany Pl. #307
Volume XVII, No. 4	No. Hollywood, Calif. 91607	Aurora. CO. 80014

Editorial Board: Harvie Barnard. Emmett A. Betts, Helen Bonnema, Wilbur J. Kupfrian, William J. Reed, Ben D. Wood.

Table of Contents

1. Obituary

Dr. Godfrey Dewey, the father of winter sports in Lake Placid whose questing mind made him a man for all seasons, died at midnight Tuesday, Oct. 18, 1977 in Placid Memorial Hospital. He had reached his 90th birthday, Sept. 3rd.

The sportsman-educator's life spanned the turbulent juncture of two centuries. And the Adirondacks and the Lake Placid Club were his anchor and his sustenance.

Godfrey Dewey first came to the Adirondacks from his native New York City – with his mother, Annie Godfrey Dewey, and his famous father, Melvil Dewey – when he was five years old. The region has changed much since then. And Dr. Dewey had much to do with those changes.

Altho speed skating was popular among Lake Placid and Saranac Lake residents, the other winter sports such as skiing and sledding were introduced later. Dr. Dewey wrote in 1955, the Club's 60th anniversary year, "The first skis, which we brought into Lake Placid that first year (for the introduction of the winter season in 1904-05), were a curiosity. They were delivered with a single long pole and toe straps, and no one here, including myself, knew enough to know that they should have been equipped with harnesses."

Over the years, Dr. Dewey engineered all the facilities for the winter sports. Such experience, Dr. Dewey believed, was what won approval for the 1932 Olympics for Lake Placid. It was largely due to the influence, ability and personality of Dr. Dewey as President of the 1932 Lake Placid Olympic Committee, that the winter games were a huge success. His efforts over the years in winter sports brought him recognition in the Ski Hall of Fame. "I got that," he said, "for the engineering of winter sports, not as a competitor."

In 1918, he was commissioned a captain in the Army Engineers. And after the war returned to Harvard Univ. where he earned his doctorate with a thesis that later in 1923 was published as: *The Relativ Frequency of English Speech Sounds.* 'A pamphlet published by the Lake Placid Club Educational Foundation said, "Dr. Dewey has been an outstanding leader in the field of shorthand, spelling reform and beginning reading alphabets for sixty years. He is presently secretary of the Simpler Spelling Assoc. and vice- president of the Lake Placid Club Educational Foundation, which was founded by his father, the late Melvil Dewey, developer of the Dewey Decimal System of library classification. From 1921 to 1946, Dr. Dewey was secretary of the Simplified Spelling Board and from 1932 to 1946 of the Spelling Reform Assoc." His most recent books are: "English Spelling: Roadblock to Reading"(1971) and "Relative Frequency of English Spellings" (1970). He served as President of Emerson College in Boston, Mass. from 1949 to 1951. He was also president of Forest Press, which publishes editions of his father's book on decimal classification.

He is survived by two daughters: Miss Margaret Dewey of Buckinghamshire, Eng. and Mrs. H. Winthrop (Katherin Dewey) Martin of Syracuse, N.Y.

He will be greatly missed by his many friends – sportsmen, educators, and spelling reformers all over the world. But he has left many monuments to be remembered in the form of outstanding accomplishments in four different fields: winter sports, education, shorthand, and spelling reform.

-o0o-

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1977 pp2,10 in the printed version]

2. The Right to Read and Write, by Raymond E. Laurita,*

*Address delivered at the 13th An. Conf. of the Reading Reform Foundation, Washington, D.C., May 16, 1974.
*Director, The Learning Center, Yorktown Hts, N.Y.

The 1970's has been designated as the decade of "The Right to Read," with the expressed goal of eliminating "functional illiteracy" by the end of the decade. The existence of a population, measured variously as consisting of anywhere from 8 to 13 millions of citizens, who cannot cope with the practical demands placed on them in their daily dealings with the printed word, is indeed a blight affecting our nation which must be removed.

The right to full fluency with one's language should be viewed not merely as a right accompanying national citizenship, but rather as one's inherent birthright as a member of the human race. Man has evolved, as but one of a multitude of animal species unable to think in symbols, to the point of being the only species of all ever created able to think and express himself in abstract symbolic forms. Man's crowning achievement has been the development of an ability, not only to extend that capacity to think in abstract internal forms, and thus to speak, but also to construct abstract writing systems enabling him to place those spoken thoughts on paper.

Speaking as a long time teacher of those who have, because of neurological, sensory, physical or environmental factors, been unable to develop fully the ability to either read or write their own language, I can only add my voice to those already raised in indignant outrage at the unfairness of what has been allowed to happen to so many millions of American children and adults. Failure to develop total facility with one's language, both in its decoding, or reading, and encoding, or written aspects, is perhaps the most insidious problem afflicting us as a people. Inability to deal with language symbols fluently may be the single most significant factor underlying the broad range of cataclysmic difficulties presently facing us, as we attempt to cope with Twentieth Century life.

It is my own belief that it is the failure of so many to learn to read, and thus take in through the print medium, those subtle combinations of words and the meanings accompanying them, which has caused our society to suffer the loss of its ideals, ethics, and basic standards of morality. Learning to read is an absolute necessity for the perpetuation of the kind of society we have constructed. The ability to deal with print is the agency the human brain has developed for dealing, not only with words and the concrete meanings associated with them, but more significantly, with the abstract ideas which flow from the use of those words, and which enable the human person to understand the abstractions involved in the use of terms such as, morality, ethics, justice and decency.

Failure to develop those internal structures, through a long developmental period of practice with a broad range of written matter, may effectively cut off large segments of the population from developing the ability to communicate through the use of language, at the abstract symbolic level. Such a capacity for high level abstraction is *the* essential requisite for the continuation of an orderly and humane society. Thus, it is highly possible that there may be large numbers of people presently engaged in the daily business of living in a democracy, who cannot function adequately, since they have literally been deprived of the linguistic means needed for survival in our particular form of society.

It is an unfortunate truth that we, all of us, have totally underestimated the complexity of the developmental functions which oral symbolic speech, and the graphic written system which is initially based upon that speech, play in the evolution of mature thought. In short, we have assumed that because *we* could speak and then learn to read and write with what seemed to be a skill that was easily and automatically developed, those who did not learn must be in some way defective, either mentally, physically, or neurologically.

Learning to speak, read and write are perhaps the most difficult tasks which man is asked to deal with, simply because they were the last to be developed in evolutionary terms. The innate cognitive structures used in the development of intelligent speech are relatively new in evolutionary terms. In fact, no one knows just when such a capacity did indeed evolve. The best guess of anthropologists places it at a mere 40 of 50 thousands of years ago, a figure which may possibly be in error by as many as 30 or 40 thousands of years. The date of the development of alphabetic systems extending that capacity for abstract symbolic speech to printed symbols, is a mere few thousand years old.

Again, the truth of the matter is that, although we presently have the ability for the most sophisticated forms of language expression ever mastered by man through our various national language systems, no one as yet knows just how those abilities are passed on to human children, so that infants all over the world master the syntactical aspects of their total speech system before the age of three. And, even more to the point, no one knows either just what manner the human species has developed for transferring that ability for dealing with speech symbols, which have no concrete existence of their own, to the development of an equally non-concrete ability to represent those internal speech symbols in the form of printed thought.

The main thrust of my remarks here are then, related to an injustice I personally perceive in our treatment of children during their early instructional experience with the print aspects of their own speech system. Although the condition has improved ever so slightly during the last few years, with the development and use of more systematic approaches to language instruction, we are still, in a sense, asking children to learn to read while withholding from them their most useful and necessary sense apparatus. Reading has generally come to be recognized as an act of immense complexity. What has not as yet been equally understood, is that the essential requisite for learning to deal with printed symbols external to the brain, is the prior development of a set of secure internal symbolic representations exactly related to those appearing in the visual field externally during the reading act. In short, learning to read rests upon the ability to construct *inside* the brain, a set of alphabetic symbols identical to those appearing *outside* the brain. In the absense of such a set of reconstructed symbols, the child is exposed to many letters, words, and very complex combinations of words, without any internal mechanism for use in their translation into orally expressed speech. In the absense of such internal machinery, the child lacks a means for understanding what these printed collections of symbols say or mean.

Asking the young child to learn to read, without simultaneously allowing him to use his hands in developing a set of clear internal alphabetic representations through writing, is akin to taping a child's mouth for the first years of his life, and then expecting him miraculously to speak when the tape is removed. Learning to speak, or encode, is inextricably related to learning to hear, or decode. One cannot develop the capacity for function in either area without the reciprocity of operations involved in both acts. In the same manner, learning to write, or encode, is inextricably related to learning to read, or decode.

It is my belief after 15 years of intensive work with thousands of children and adults of all ages, that the major cause of failure in so many of our brothers and sisters in learning to read, has been *our* failure to understand the direct relationship that exists between the reading and writing acts. Failure to assist children, during the early stages of learning to deal with print, to develop equivalent facility with *both* the written and the reading aspects of that print medium, has led to the disastrous situation we now face as a people.

The best way to teach children to read initially, and to rehabilitate those adults who have been deprived of total language facility, is by coordinating instruction in reading with instruction in writing. Hopefully, those who hear these words will think of the remaining years of the '70's, not only as the decade of "The Right to Read," but more accurately and usefully as the decade of "The Right to Read *and* Write."

-o0o-

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1977 pp3–10 in the printed version]

3. A New Perspective of English Orthography and its Effect upon Speech to Print Relationships, by Raymond E. Laurita*

*Director, The Learning Center, Yorktown Heights, N.Y.

The question of how the human mind develops the capacity to deal with print would seem to be basic to any discussion of the act itself. And yet, there are woefully few answers available, no matter how deeply one delves. At present, no one can state with even a moderate degree of certitude, precisely how *thought is* translated into *sound* and then into *word symbols* for processing by the human species, on either the oral or graphic print levels.

Whatever the answer may turn out to be, concerning the how of wad processing, if indeed one is ever forthcoming, there are several things we do know enough about now to allow for clearer thinking than has been evident to this point in time. What we do know with certainty is that words are composed of specific sequences of alphabetic symbols, with each bearing an essential relationship with its spoken counterpart! [1] Printed and spoken language are inextricably interwoven as bearers of thought in symbolic form.

What differentiates these two forms of expressive symbolic human output, are the very different media used by the speaker or writer to express internalized meanings in externalized form. They are media whose limitations are bound by the parameters of the sensory apparatus used in their production and reception.

Because of the closeness of the bond existing between these two expressive forms, and the lateness of our understanding concerning their true neural character, it is now readily apparent that a monumental error in interpretation has been made concerning the precise nature of that relationship. It is an error involving the directness of the sound to symbol relationship existing between the media used to express speech and print, an error having both qualitative and quantitative ramifications.

It is hoped that a discussion of both aspects of this faulty initial, and largely continuing, misinterpretation will pave the way for the development of a new and more logical perspective of the nature of the alphabetic medium and its relation to speech. Acceptance of the new direction to be offered has the potential to radically change perceptions, not only of those responsible for the development of the instructional procedures used to teach language to children and adults, but perhaps even to a broadening of understanding of the evolutionary nature and progressive development of both speech and print as expressive symbolic media.

That there is a direct relationship between the individual media elements themselves, the sounds and the letters, is self-evident and needs no further elucidation. The individual letters of the alphabet are directly related to individual speech sounds, albeit with certain apparent imperfections, as in *sign, knock, sure, phone,* etc.

Equally self-evident is the sequential nature of the sound and symbol relationship which each medium uses in in the organization of meaningful groupings of oral and printed symbols, again, however imperfect this sequential relationship may at times appear in our present state of limited

understanding of words such as, *field, break, feud, doesn't,* etc.

There is in reality, only one area open, for meaningful discussion concerning the sound to symbol relationship itself which governs the production of spoken and printed language. That area involves both the apparent lack of precision in individual sound to symbol relations, as in the various pronunciations of the letter c in *lack, chop, ice,* etc., and the equally apparent absence of an observeable overall consistency in words such as *was, their, laugh, tough,* etc.

However, once again, no attempt will be made here to specifically explain even a small part of these apparent individual inconsistencies, for it is believed no such attempt is necessary. Enough time and energy has already been expended in what it is now hoped will be perceived to have been a largely fruitless and self-defeating activity. Justification for this position lies in the undeniable truth that the human species, both individually and collectively, does in fact possess the capacity to store and retrieve all of the words available to us in our print systems, to a greater or lesser degree.

The human brain does indeed have the capacity to deal with the most glaring examples of apparent orthographic disharmony. It must be accepted that if even a single member of the human species demonstrated the capacity to learn to spell all, or most, of the millions of words which have been catalogued in our unabridged dictionaries, it would be ample evidence of an underlying categorical unity present in the medium itself, **[2]** one able to be dealt with through the neural processes inherited by man as a species.

The existence of such an individual skill would indicate the presence of an innate potential which would allow all other members of the species, as inheritors of that same neural structuring capacity, to learn how to process printed symbols in precisely the same way each of us learns to deal with the species-specific problem of learning to speak.

All too often in discussions revolving around the supposed irregularity of the English orthographic system, sight is lost of a contradiction which is inherent even in these discussions themselves. How is it possible for a graphic medium, one having the breadth and flexibility able to be observed in the vast and ever growing treasury of printed expression open to us all, to at one and the same time be considered as lacking in at least as much harmony and unity as is present in the spoken medium from whence print flows? How would it have been possible for the collective and individual human mind to have learned to respond to an invention of its own creative construction, if that creation were lacking in some form of categorical structure of the type able to be observed in all other human creations, a structure essential as an underlayment for the continuity of internal and external exchange? **[3]**

The answer to these questions is, that the medium is, and can be only conceived as being, structurally consistent. It is categorically perfect and thus able to be perceived and responded to initially by human sensory processing systems, and in time, by the more abstract formal processing systems evolved by man for higher level symbolic activity.

The problem of learning how to spell with ease and accuracy lies not in the medium, but rather in us and our faulty understanding and interpretation of the essential structure of that medium itself. In the beginning, the first attempts made to explain the external structure of the medium were necessarily made without a clear awareness of the internal processing mechanisms used by the brain to deal with either concrete or abstract reality. It was this faulty initial effort to explain linguistic

structure, concomitant with the development of equally faulty instructional procedures, which was to lay the foundation for the monumental confusion which has resulted, and continues to result, in increasingly less successful efforts to teach children and adults to deal with all aspects of print. We are presently exhausting our energies as we persist perseveratively in the effort to effectuate a perfect relationship between sound and symbol with media which are not able, nor need, to be so bonded together.

Perhaps the most significant aspect of the problems associated with the widespread language insufficiency observeable today, concerns the extent to which we, as a people, have the capacity to recognize the need for a better understanding of the underlying systems governing the production of printed language. Our continued survival as an advanced technological society may depend upon our speedy and successful response to this problem.

At present, since we can without hesitation state only that, first, there is an essential relationship between speech and print in the individual letter and sound elements produced in both media, and second, that there is a sequential character observeable in that initial sound to symbol relationship resulting in the production of words, then that is the point at which discussions must begin.
Not all of the work that has been done in the past must of needs be discarded in the development of new perceptions. However, what is preserved must be examined carefully and continually tested thoroughly to insure that new errors are not made in the name of another new scientific approach to language study, however valid it may be at the outset. It is our *perception* of the essential underlying structure that must change, to allow previously unobserved organizations of letter symbols to be observed and processed internally by the brain.

The initial requisite in the development of a new perspective must be the recognition of the vowel as having had prime significance in the evolution of our present speech and print systems. It is around the vowel that the near infinity of variation observeable in the millions of word sequences able to be produced in English revolves. Such significance should not come as a surprise and should have been recognized long since, for it is the sound of the vowels which were of necessity first emitted by our earliest human ancesters, long before they had developed even the rudimentary beginnings of an expressive symbolic speech capacity. The sounds of the vowel require no specific sequence of oral events for their utterance other than that of having the oral cavity and mouth in a position to allow for the release of internal pressures generated in the chest cavity. They continue to be the first sounds emitted by the human baby as he makes his entry into society with a primal scream.

A second requisite, essential for a clearer understanding of our print system, requires the discarding of a pernicious idea, one which has never had validity. It is the idea that we can somehow consider certain of our printed letter combinations as being irregular and, as such, treated neurally in a manner qualitatively different from all other words. Such a conception lays the groundwork for the establishment of an unrealistic and illogical mind set, one which in time results for some in the attempt to store *all* incoming letter combinations as individual meaning bearers with their own unique and non-categorical sequence.

My intent here is to make the point that *words***,** as a category, are all processed at the internal level through the operations of the brain, functioning through the aegis of its complex cellular system. This system depends upon the central nervous system for its expressive and receptive needs. Thus, all words, be they regular, or what is referred to as irregular, receive the same "neural treatment" as

they are processed within the brain. It is my belief that since all the entities we respond to as words are in truth treated in the same manner, they must contain within their external structure a regularity which the brain can respond to consistently and thus store for immediate retrieval. Admittedly this structure may be difficult to observe in some words, but I am firmly convinced it is there nevertheless, functioning at the unconscious level beyond our present level of conscious awareness. [4]

All graphic symbols, both collectively, as the sum total of words available at any given time in the English language, and individually, as the 26 alphabetic symbols contained in the English orthographic system, must of necessity be perceived in a manner consistent with the neural association and transfer systems which the human species has evolved for such symbolic activity. Supposed irregularities in words are not, in truth, different or unique in their essence as combinations of letter symbols bearing a symbolic meaning. They differ only in their accidentals, those relating to the preciseness of the sound to symbol relationship, and/or the sequence of the elements used.

All words, both those we refer to as regular, and those referred to as being irregular, are composed of a set of line and curved segments which have evolved in time and space into a universally agreed upon alphabet. The differences determining regularity are quantitative, not qualitative, with the result that there are no truly irregular words, only those which are more or less categorically precise.

Words must be perceived of initially as combinations of sound, able to be produced by human beings, and which stand for the multiple aspects of both concrete and abstract reality, combinations which are eminently categorical in their essence. At the graphic level of expression, the sound to symbol relationship may result in words readily able to be perceived in broad linguistic categories, such as *fat-cat-hat,* etc., or *late-date-fate,* etc. They may also appear at this same level as letter combinations which are atypical and less able to be categorized readily, such as *was, their, laugh, tough,* etc. Nevertheless, these latter words are in truth categorical. They are examples of extremely limited categories, in some cases perhaps the only example (such as "of"), which are evolutionary remnants whose linguistic relatives have passed into a state of non-use.

Acceptance of the two requisite principles already stated, constitutes an essential minimum required for the development of a new perspective of the categoricality of our print medium. The positing of such an underlying categorical unity appears to be the only logical way to explain the capacity of developing human children to manifest the clear ability to process and read a significant portion of our printed language system, not only during the early months and years of their schooling, but in a multitude of well attested cases, to demonstrate such an ability long before their entry into the formal school environment. Such cases lend substantial support to the existence of an underlying categorical unity within the graphic print system, one able to be perceived at the unconscious level and closely allied there neurally to the internal processing systems used by these same children in the development of a substantial speaking vocabulary during the earliest months and years of their infancy.

Once one observes the all-encompassing nature of the system able to be constructed when the vowel becomes the essential element in the processing system, the ability of the developing learner, to absorb an increasingly large number of apparently atypical words into his reading and writing vocabularies, becomes far more understandable and logical. In a vowel centered structuring system, these atypical words are able to be perceived and processed, not as unique and qualitatively

different examples of symbolic expression, but rather as members of categories which although having a limited value and use, are nevertheless categorical and thus able to be stored away for retrieval in precisely the same manner as all other more common and useful combinations of letter symbols.

In the following explanation of a vowel centered linguistic system to serve as the base underlying the English orthographic system, one which it is believed will eventually allow virtually the entire English language to be placed into specific and logical categories, it is essential that certain distinctions be clearly understood and adhered to. These distinctions involve the levels of directness in the relationship that exists between speech and print. In considering the causes underlying the present confusion concerning the explanations presently given to account for the great difficulty millions of learners face in developing spelling fluency, perhaps the most obvious is the failure of virtually every current spelling system to explicate clearly, and then to reinforce for students, the difference between words bearing a direct, or phonic, sound to symbol relationship, and those in which the relationship is indirect, or structural. Just as the development of spoken language travels a course from the utterance of single sound elements, to single syllables, to multi-syllabic combinations of spoken syllables, so also does the graphic system follow such a course. Graphic word construction travels from letter units, to single syllable units of more than one letter, to combinations of multi-syllabic units.

In bringing a sense of order to English orthography, one which will help learners to integrate increasingly complex combinations of graphic symbols into understandable and retrievable categorical systems, through the unconscious formation of internal cell associations, it is essential that this sequence of development be firmly established and understood. Not only is awareness necessary on the part of students and teachers, but also by those who construct instructional materials, since the bulk of our citizens do in fact develop their spelling skills by exposure to school instructional programs.

In English, all words can initially be categorized as fitting into two broad, yet distinct, levels of word processing: those which are able to be processed directly, or phonically, as single syllable combinations of sound-syllables, such as *hat, rain, was,* etc.; and those which can be processed indirectly, or structurally, as combinations of already formed syllabic roots, to which have been added inflections, prefixes and suffixes, such as *jumper, remain, subtraction,* etc. These two levels of primary and secondary word process are referred to by myself and my associate, Phillip Trembley, as the Direct or Phonic Level of Process, and the Indirect or Structural Level of Process.

Within the confines of these two levels it is possible to construct groupings into which virtually all English words can be fitted categorically. The parameters of these categorical groupings appear at this time to be finite and thus able to eventually be listed in their totality for comprehensive computerized study. These two process levels can be further subdivided, with the primary level having three distinct sub-levels of direct phonic process, and the secondary level having at least two distinct sub levels of indirect process. These Five Levels of Process Difficulty can be defined and exemplified as follows:

Five Levels of Process Difficulty.

A. Direct or Phonic Processing

Level I – involves phonic processing of words consisting of vowels and individual consonants. examples: *need, pet, lake, cat,* etc.

Level II – involves phonic processing of words consisting of vowels and blends of consonants. examples: *sleep, spent, slave, stamp,* etc.

Level III – involves phonic processing of words consisting of vowels and consonant digraphs. examples: *wheel, check, bathe, mash,* etc.

B. Indirect or Structural Processing

Level IV – involves structural processing of words consisting of structural units able to be formed from the first three levels of process in combinations with inflections. examples: *meeting, rested, shady, faster,* etc.

Level V – involves structural processing of words consisting of structural units able to be formed from the first three levels of process it combination with both affixes and inflections. examples: *agreement,* inventively, engagements, commander, etc.

In a graphic processing system which is vowel centered, words are able to be categorized further into two distinct directional sequences, the vertical, as illustrated above in the Five Levels of Process Difficulty, and the horizontal. The horizontal directional sequence can be observed in the examples listed after each of the Five Levels of Process Difficulty. The ability to process words having a categorical relationship is only possible when the underlying principle is the vowel. It is the vowel, or the vowel with its signal, which becomes the essential categorical element permitting words to be processed logically in both a horizontal and vertical direction. My associate and I have already completed the categorization process for 15 specific vowels, which we refer to as Stages for our own specific purposes. (1) The 15 stages arranged in their horizontal sequence at Level I are:

Horizontal Organization
Level I

Stage 1 – *ee* (need)
Stage 2 – *e* (pet)
Stage 3 – *a-e* (lake)
Stage 4 – *a* (cat)
Stage 5 – *i-e* (five)
Stage 6 – *I* (sit)
Stage 7 – *o-e* (rope)
Stage 8 – *o* (hot)
Stage 9 – *u-e* (mule)
Stage 10 – *u* (bug)
Stage 11 – *ai* (rain)
Stage 12 – *ea* (team)
Stage 13 – *ie,y* (pie,my)
Stage 14 – *oa* (coat)
Stage 15 – *ue* (Sue)

Stages 1 through 4 are arranged in terms of their vertical sequence as follows:

Vertical Organization

	Stage 1 (*ee*)	Stage 2 (*e*)	Stage 3 (a-e)	Stage 4 (a)
Level I	need	pet	lake	cat
Level II	sleep	spent	slave	stamp
Level III	wheel	check	bathe	that
Level IV	meeting	rested	shady	faster
Level V	agreement	inventively	engagements	commander

It must be clearly understood by all that the only words which should be considered as having a direct sound to symbol relationship, and thus to be synthesized as combinations of individual sound symbols, are those constructed of a single graphic syllable, or more precisely, a single structural unit, either words such as run, late, sleep, etc., or syllabic units such as act and inch, as in pact and clinch. Words possessing a single syllable when processed on the oral level, such as played, jumped and *talked,* do not optimally respond to direct processing and should not be so dealt with.

Because of the underlying structure of the English print system, one necessarily bearing a direct neural association with the oral symbols used to express speech, consideration of polysyllables as having a direct sound to symbol relationship is unparsimonious, and thus uncharacteristic of our human neural processing systems. It is believed by the writer, that it is this very type of instruction, that which teaches students to use direct or phonic principles in the solution of polysyllabic structures possessing only an indirect sound to symbol relationship, which lies at the root of most cases of spelling inadequacy. The only polysyllabic wards which occasionally lend themselves ideally to direct phonic processing are words which are not really true examples of the polysyllable. They are words which should more accurately be considered as combinations of two or more individual word units connected artificially, words commonly referred to as compound words, such as *fireman, mailman, airport*, etc.

To understand the pernicious and debilitating effects of instructing children to use phonic, or combined phonic-structural analytic procedures, in dealing with polysyllables, such as *faster, dining*, and *invention*, it is important to consider the effects of such instruction.

Following the present rules of syllabicate processing, each of these words is analyzed into its individual component parts *as they are pronounced on the spoken level of expression,* i.e., *fas ter, di ning*, and *in ven tion*. The result are relationships between speech and print which do indeed have validity at the oral level of process in terms of their syllabicate discreteness as pronounced syllables. It should be clear, however, that although such processing serves the ends dictated by the demands placed upon oral language production from an evolutionary standpoint, it ill serves the needs of the graphic medium which must be processed, not by the combined uses of the auditory and oral sense systems working in concert, but rather by the combined use of the auditory, oral, visual and kinesthetictactual sense systems, an evolutionary development involving the harmonization of these systems for the purpose of graphic symbolic expression, a development which was extremely late in making its appearance in human society.

Print is not simply speech placed on paper as it is simplistically considered by too many. It is that and a great deal more. It is a system made possible through the process of evolution, occurring over time and space, as man learned how to represent his thought expressively in a sequence proceeding, first, through drawings and carvings directly representative of reality (drawings and carvings found in early man's cave homes and on bone fragments), second, through drawings indirectly representative of reality (late Egyptian hieroglyphs and Chinese pictographs), third, through non-representative symbolic expressions of concretely representative reality (oral symbols and related graphic symbols used to stand directly for the sounds or names associated with various aspects of reality, as is *man, dog*, and *tree*), and finally, to the development of an alphabetic system consisting of abstract non-representative symbols able to graphically represent the totality of man's interior thought (graphic symbols which have only an indirect sound to symbol association with the abstractions they represent, as in *justice*, *democracy* and *vindictiveness*).

In the three examples given, there are no realities, either concrete or abstract, even remotely representative of the ideas contained within the elements of their graphic syllabic make-up, when the division is based on their oral pronunciation, rather than on their essential graphic integrity as meaning bearers – *fas ter, di ning* and in *vex tion.*

The more accurate manner of considering these three common wads, albeit a manner not directly related to their oral syllabicate pronunciation, is to represent them indirectly in terms of their structural make-up, that combination of related letter units containing the core meanings held within their totality – *fast* er, *din(e) ing* and *in vent ion*. When viewed in this manner, spelling becomes an activity intimately tied to meaning and structure, rather than one bound by the limitations imposed by the evolutionarily prior medium of speech.

To elaborate upon this idea of direct phonic and indirect structural relationships, consider the word (syllabic unit) *act*. **[5]** At the primary direct level of process, it responds precisely to phonic processing both synthetically and analytically, since it is composed of three specific sound symbols in a specific and unchanging sequence. It is an example of one of the two most basic graphic syllable units in the English orthographic system, that is, a vowel carrying the short vowel sound followed by two consonants, as in *act, est, ill, ong,* etc. The second basic graphic syllabic unit consists of a vowel and its signal carrying the long sound and appearing in combination with a single consonant, as in *ate, eel, ide, ain, oam,* etc.

Once a unit, such as *act,* has been processed graphically, through a direct association and transfer of its three sequentially consistent print elements with its meaning and pronunciation counterpart on the oral level, a direct association has been made. Processing all other polysyllables containing the unit by direct means rather than indirectly, in words such as *acting, faction, distractability*, etc., is an unparsimonious expenditure of the brain's energies. It is being posited here and elsewhere, that such an illogical response to print may result in a form of fragmentation with concomitant anxiety, a condition leading to either or both, faulty word processing far reading (decoding) and faulty word processing for spelling (encoding). [**Ref 2**]

Once the developing human brain has perceived the essential sequence and character of the individual elements in the unit *act,* and has related them directly for encoding and decoding purposes, all words containing that graphic syllabic unit should be considered as categorical relatives and stored away for associative recall and retrieval, to be used again when either the sound or the graphic appearance of that element is perceived in an orally or graphically produced context.

Table I contains the major portion of words able to be constructed by the addition of prefixes, suffixes and inflections to the graphic symbolic unit *act.* Table II contains the major portion of words able to be constructed by the addition of individual or blends of consonants to the graphic syllabic unit *act,* and the subsequent addition of affixes and inflections. In toto, these two Tables constitute a listing of the words considered as comprising the categorical familial unit *act.* As will be seen, they constitute a significant body of words which respond totally to indirect structural processing, with no trace of irregularity in their spelling.

Because of errors of understanding made during the development of spelling instructional approaches in the past, programs which failed to recognize the essential relationship between external symbolic systems and internal brain function, education continues to persist in fragmenting learners during the crucial early stages of their symbolic development. Instead of assisting them to develop and reinforce consistent direct external sound to symbol relationships for internal association with their neural counterparts, learners are literally conditioned to consider words, not as units related to larger categorical systems, but rather as individual and unique sequences of letter elements which may or may not have a perfect sound to symbol relationship.

The establishment of secure internal processing abilities, enabling the learner to develop initially an unconscious, and eventually a more conscious awareness of the categorical nature of the print symbolic processes, is effectively stifled in literally millions of cases. Expecting children to learn

these sequences in isolation, and then store them away for immediate recall, *prior to the establishment of a set of secure categorical processing procedures related directly to the internal neural systems used to process speech,* "atypical," or "members of categories having a limited value is folly. It is the establishment of such a perseverative mind set, one which allows for storage and retrieval only by considering the uniqueness of words, rather than through a conscious or unconscious recognition of their categorical likenesses, which results in the development of faulty word processing procedures for print.

Continuation in the naive expectation that immature learners, or those who have been frustrated by years of frustration and failure, could conceiveably perceive and respond individually to the fine distinctions which exist between words which are referred to as regular, and those referred to variously as irregular, sight wads, spelling demons, ere., and thus store each individually, is to be unrealistic and illogical. To hold such a view is to be unaware of the neural character of the symbolic systems that allow humans to generalize about their associations of concrete sensory reality with abstract reality, that ability which in essence defines the human species and differentiates him from all other forms of life. In qualitative and quantitative terms, it is his symbolic ability which not only places man at the pinacle of evolutionary development, but also makes him ultimately responsible for the survival of his own, and perhaps all other life forms.

It is the supreme irony that this same symbolic aptitude which man has evolved over countless eons, has, at one and the same time, provided him with an equivalent capacity to so disturb and disrupt the ecologic harmony of his planet, that he could in time make life on that planet cease to be a viable reality.

References

1. Laurita, Raymond E. and Trembley, Phillip W., *Spelling Mastery.* L & T Educational Materials, Inc.,Yorktown Heights, N. Y. 1975.
2. Laurita, Raymond E. *Reading, Writing and Creativity.* Special Child Publications, Seattle, Wash. 1973.

[1] Ed. note: Once this was true, but its falsity now is the cause of all our troubles.

[2] Editorial comment: We don't agree that "if a single human demonstrated the capacity to learn to spell . . . it would be ample evidence of a categorical unity present in the medium itself." Many pupils (especially girls) learn to recognize words by a visual (almost fotografic) means, the same as the Chinese, but is there categorical unity there? And then you say, "the existence of such an individual skill would indicate the presence of an innate potential which would allow *all other* members of the species to learn how to process printed symbols in precisely the same way, etc." The fact that a brilliant Englishman was able to find and decipher the Rosetta Stone and hence deduce the relationship between the Egyptian cuneform syllabary and Greek printing is no reason to expect that all others (or even many others) can do so also. And how many of the millions of persons who have read Einstein's Theory of Relativity can understand it? Probably less than 1/10th of 1%. Therefore it is of little consequence that *some* brains have this capacity. We are concerned with the multitude who do not. I can't see how this is evidence of a categorical unity in the medium itself.

**Reply to the Editor:* I can understand why you might disagree with my statement about ". . . if a single human being demonstrated. . . of a categorical unity in the medium itself." Given the interpretation you have made, I too would be hard pressed to support my statement. However, my intent goes much deeper and does not necessarily imply that "all" human beings will learn what is to be learned or will understand everything that there is for us to understand in print. My meaning pertains to intrinsic potentials. If a single ape or chimpanzee were to demonstrate a capacity for

spoken language, then the conclusion would have to be drawn that there is within the internal structure of the brain of these primates, a latent potential for speech which has not as yet been activated across the board. Certainly there is a much larger potential for symbolic interchange with these animals than has been recognized heretofore, as evidenced by the many studies presently being conducted. However, they simply do not have the capacity for oral speech and will never have such a potential unless their species-specific character radically changes. Man as a species has the innate potential to develop the capacity to express himself in oral and graphic symbols, and that is all that is implied in my statement.

[3] *Editor's comment:* There is no such thing as a collective human mind. Any grouping of human minds shows a great divergence in thinking. The English language is a product of a combination of many borrowings from other languages which in themselves have unity of symbolization but divergence of thought and symbolization with other foreign cultures. A mixture of cabbages, potatoes and rhubarb can be called vegetables, but that does not mean that all vegetables are structurally the same or that each is compatible with the other. There is no categorical unity.

[4] *Editor's comment: You* are right in saying all words must(?) (but I say should) contain within their external structure a regularity which the brain can respond to consistently and thus store for immediate retrieval. But I think the brain recognizes words neurally in two ways: one, as a phonic representation of the word's sound; two (and if the first doesn't work) as a visual picture of the shape (coast line) of the ascenders, descenders, and single height letters. Perhaps there is a third way – a combination of partially phonic and partially fotografic. (See Louis Foley, "It Doesn't Look Right," *Reading Horizons,* Spring 1966 and "Words Need to Look Right," *Reading Horizons,* Winter,' 74)

[5] As an incidental point of interest to students of language, it appears to the author that the blend *ct*, as it appears in *act, ect, ict, oct*, and *uct*, may possibly be the most common consonant blend in the entire English language.

[These tables were shown in vertical columns]

Table I

Lists of words involving the word structure act with affixes

Affix Endings
s ing ed or ors ion ions ionism ionary ionaries ionable ionably ive ively iveness ivity ivities ivist ivists ivism ivate ivates ivating ivated ivator ivators ivation ivations ual ually ualness uality ualities ualize alizes ualizing ualized ualization ure ures ment ments able uate uates uating uated uator uators uation uations uary uaries uarial uarially ory ance ances ly ness itude

act acts acting acted actor actors action actions actionable actionably active actively activeness activity activities activist activists activism activate activates activating activated activator activators activation activations actual actually actualness actuality actualities actualize actualizes actualizing actualized actualization actuate actuates actuating actuated actuator actuators actuation actuations actuary actuaries actuarial actuarially

react reacts reacting reacted reactor reactors reaction reactions reactionism reactionary reactionaries reactive reactivate reactivates reactivating reactivated reactivation reactance reactances

preact preacts preacting preacted preaction preactions preactive preactory

retroact retroacts retroacting retroacted retroactor retroactors retroaction retroactions retroactive retroactively retroactiveness retroactivity

interact interacts interacting interacted interaction interactions interactive

counteract counteracts counteracting counteracted counteraction counteractions counteractive counteractively

enact enacts enacting enacted enactor enactors enactive enacture enactures enactment enactments enactable enactory

reenact reenacts reenacting reenacted reenaction reenactions reenactment reenactments

inact inaction inactive inactively inactiveness inactivity inactivate inactivates inactivating inactivated inactivation

deact deactivate deactivates deactivating deactivated deactivator deactivators deactivation deactivations

exact exacts exacting exacted exactor exactors exaction exactions exactable exactly exactness exactitude

inexact inexactly inexactness inexactitude

Table II

Root words involving the letter category act with initial consonants, blends of consonants and affixes

bact
bacteremia bacteria bacterial bacterially bacteriology bacteriological bacteriologically bacteriolysin bacteriolysis bacteriolytic bacteriophage bacterioscopy bacterioscopical bacterioscopical bacterioscopist bacteriostatic bacterium bacterize bacterizes bacterizing bacterized bacterization bacteroid bacteroidal

fact
fact facts factor factors factory factories factorial factorize factorizes factorizing factorized factorization factorizations faction factions factional factionist factionists factionism factionary factual factually factious factiously factiously factitious factitiously factitiousness factice

fract
fracted fraction fractional fractionate fractionates fractionating fractionated fractionate fractionates fractionating fractionated fractionization fracture fractures fracturing fractured fractural fractious fractiously fractiousness

infract infracts infracting infracted infractor infractors infraction infractions
refract refracts refracting refracted refractor refractors refraction refractions refractional refractive refractivity refractiveness refractivity refractory refractories refractorily refractoriness

jact
jactation jactitation

lact
lactic lactate lactates lactating lactated lactation lactalbumen lactam lactary lactase lacteal lactean lacteous lactescence lactescency lactescent lactiferous lactoflavin lactogenic lactometer lactoscope lactose

mact
mactation

pact
pact pacts
compact compacts compacting compacted compactly compactness
impact impacts impacting impacted impaction

pract
praticable practicable practicably practicability practical practically practicall practicality practicalities practice practices practicing practiced practicer practitioner practitioners impracticable impracticably impracticability impractical impracticalness impracticality

tact
taction tactual tactually tactless tactlessly tactlessness tactful tactfully tactfulness tactic tactics tactical tactically tactician tacticians tactile tactility
intact intactness
contact contacts contacting contacted contactor contactors contactual

tract
tract tracts tractiog tracted tractor tractors traction tractive tractable tractably tractability tractate tractile tractility tractarian tractarians tractarianism

abstract abstracts abstracting abstracted abstractedly abstractedness abstracter abstractly abstractness abstractive abstraction abstractions abstractionist abstractionists abstractionism
attract attracts attracting attracted attractor attractors attractive attractively attractiveness attraction attractions attractable attractableness attractability attractive
unattracted unattractive

contract contracts contracting contracted contractedly contractedness contractor contractors contractive contraction contractions contractible contractableness contractability contractible contractibleness contractibility contracture contractures contractile contractility

detract detracts detracting detracted detractor detractors detractive detraction detractions detractory
distract distracts distracting distracted distractedly distractive distraction distractions

extract extracts extracting extracted extractor extractors extractive extraction extractions extractable extractable

protract protracts protracting protracted protractor protractors protractile protraction protractions protractile

retract retracts retracting retracted retractor retractors retractable retraction retractation retractile retractility retractive

subtract subtracts subtracting subtracted subtracter subtractive subtraction subtraction

Editorial comment by Helen Bonnema Bisgard:

In the above article, Raymond E. Laurita draws upon his years of experience in helping children to learn to read and spell. He points out his objections to certain phonics methods and recommends procedures he has found valuable in teaching Traditional Orthography (T.O.). It is appropriate that he do so. However, he detracts from his effectiveness by giving the impression that his work is easy, and that T.O. is the most efficient system that can be devised for the English language.

He does not acknowledge that a cause of our present difficulty with spelling is the fact that about 40 sounds must be written by means of a 26-letter alphabet, which altho adequate for Latin is very inadequate for English. He asserts that traditional orthography is "categorically perfect and thus able to be perceived and responded initially by human sensory processing systems, and in time, by the more abstract formal processing systems evolved by man for higher level symbolic activity." But he admits that some of the many categories (like "of") have only one example.

When he contends that it can be responded to by the human sensory processing system *in time,* he doesn't state how much time – how many years it takes with some pupils. Nor does he assure us that *all* children can be expected to respond in this manner, for if this were true, some *one* method of teaching reading would be successful with *all* children.

Laurita continues, "The problem of learning how to spell with ease and accuracy lies not in the medium, but rather in us and our faulty understanding and interpretation of the essential structure of that medium itself." He writes of the supposed irregularity of the English orthographic system, and objects to calling any words "irregular." He calls them "atypical", or "members of categories having a limited value and use," or as having a relationship which is "indirect" or "structural."

He also states: "We are presently exhausting our energies in the effort to effectuate a perfect relationship between sound and symbol with media which are not able, nor need, to be so bonded together." Does he mean to imply that the Netherlandic people were foolish to change their spelling by omitting superflous vowels, consonants, and flectional endings which had long ceased to be pronounced? (See *Spelling Progress Bulletin,* Fall 1972 and Fall 1973 for an account of these changes.)

Laurita appears to be like the staff members of a hospital in a simile used by Godfrey Dewey in *English Spelling: Roadblock to Reading:* "those who deal with the problems created by the irregularities of English spelling, thereby dealing with symptoms instead of the disease, resemble nothing so much as efforts to build a modern emergency hospital at a grade crossing instead of eliminating the crossing. Indeed, the various reading methods are efforts to rationalize the irrational."

Like the hospital doctors who treat injuries from avoidable accidents, Laurita has taught for years the only presently acceptable orthography until he can no longer see how or why it should be improved. Is it possible that some of his devotion to the difficulties inherent in T.O. arises from a subconscious feeling that his livlihood depends upon their persistence?

-o0o-

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1977 p10 in the printed version]

4. The Vaecancy, by Frank du Feu

A perfet secret aerial poest
Is advertiser's onest boast.
The laedy he will soon engaje
Is less than thhirty years of aje;
Eight O's, two A's in G.C.E.,
Or ueniversity degree;
A sueper-lingwist glad to speak
Italian, Spanish, French or Greek.
Her typing must hav wun a prize,
Be clear and pleasing to the eyes;
Her shorthand must cause no delay,
Two hundred wards a minit, say;
Her writing shuod be copperplate;
Her filing methhods up-to-date.
She must hav presence, tact and poise,
Wurk rapidly with little noise;
Shuod be well able, bie and larje,
When I'm away, to take fuoll charje;
To anser letters, giv advice,
Explain away excessiv price;
Be competent to estimate
Potential of a smaul estate
When unexpectedly for sale.
Peruse the Gardian, Sun, and Mail,
The Telegraf, Financial Times
For property in forin climes.
Shuod hav the drive of Bernard Shaw,
Know every loophole in the law
To second me in tax evasion.
Be dedicaeted. On occaesion,
Be quite prepared to travel far,
To Cyeprus, Maulta, Zanzibar,
Bermueda, Trinidad, Capree
In serch of villas bie the sea.
And if on her return from France,
She cums upon me, bie mischance,
Reposing on the office floor,
A victim of the nite before,
She must not mutter, "Let me say,
I'm leaving yoor employ today."
But make no comment, cause no stir,
Just say, "I beg yoor pardon, sir."

For wun hoo satisfies thiss blurb,
The salary will be superb.
Two thhousand pounds a year with meals,
Extra commission on disonest deals,
A moest attrictiv pension skeme,
And summer holidays supreme.
No member of mie staff shall see
A prievate letter sent to me;
So make yoor applicaetion soon,
A job like thiss will be a boon.

-o0o-

5. What is Reading?, by Newell W. Tune

Some say reading is decoding the printed symbols into speech sounds. Others take a broader viewpoint and say it is extracting meaning from the print or writing? But isn't that the *objective* of reading rather than the process itself? Decoding the printed symbols is reading because if the words as sounded are in the reader's listening and speaking vocabulary, they will be understood. If not, they will not be understood any better if read to him by a person who understands what he is reading and speaking. As an example, a person can read from a page of a medical journal or a lawyer's jargon, or an engineer's treatise and not understand most of it because some of its technical words or terms are not in the reader's understanding vocabulary, but yet if this same person were to read aloud this same article at a medical convention, his listeners who understand medical terminology, would understand what he read even tho the speaking reader did not.

There is a corollary to this: in the case of homophones, context needs to be used to determine the proper meaning of such multiple meaning words. These are sometimes distinguished on the printed page by different spelling, as: *son* and *sun, bin* and *been, die* and *dye,* etc., but thousands of words in the dictionary have from several to nearly 100 meanings, some of which are allied and others of which are widely different. Yet the dictionary makers do not see a need to have a dozen different spellings for such wards as: *fall, spring, bay, bow, beat, charge, cross, draw, go, ground, light, low, pack, pass, point, quarter, range, take, ring, round, run, scale, set, slip, throw, top, touch, turn,* and many others. A writer knows that he must be careful in using these multiple-meaning words, and uses them in context so that he is not misunderstood. And those words which have a difference in spelling to show a difference in meaning are used more carelessly by writers as they can depend upon the spelling to clarify the meaning, but when this is read aloud, it is sometimes confusible.

-o0o-

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1977 pp11–12 in the printed version]

6. Eagerness to Learn, by Emmett Albert Betts, Ph.D., LL.D.

*Winter Haven, Fla..

Motivation, from within, is the keystone of satisfying achievement-of need fulfillment.
Let us consider two sequential formulas for success in reading:

1. Knowledge + Skills + Success = Interest
2. Interest + Personal Purpose = Motivation

Knowledge.

Knowledge, an awareness of relationships between ideas, which is far more than mere information, is a product of depth reading and listening and contributes directly to interest. After all, a pupil is interested in something when he knows something about it.

Often pupils who have a collection of rocks can explain how they were formed, what they tell about the earth's history, and how they are used. Moreover, they are usually on the alert for more and more information on rocks. Other pupils may be bird watchers who can identify dozens of species, describing nesting habits and coloration of eggs, and explain the value of bird banding. These pupils, too, often are up-to-date on their reading of both fact and fiction about birds.

Stray bits of *information* about rocks, birds, outer space, and other topics may contribute very little to worthwhile interests, but when this information is organized as *knowledge,* pupils have genuine interest.

A pupil becomes interested in something when he knows something about it-something he can tell others. That is, learning begets learning; it generates interest.

Knowledge Generates Interest.

Today, many nine- and ten-year-olds are seriously interested in the study of rockets and space ships. Some of these children have an amazing understanding of Newton's Third Law of Motion and of the pioneer work on liquid-fuel rockets of, Dr. Robert Hutchings Goddard. As they dig deeper into a topic of interest, they mine more information to be smelted into knowledge. In turn, the more knowledge they have, the deeper is their interest. Knowledge generates interest and feeds on itself. In short, pupils have far more *interest* in *what they know* than in what they know about.

Skills.

When beginning reading instruction is postponed too long, pupils may not have the necessary skills to pursue their interests through reading. Likewise, when superior pupils at higher levels are paced by the learning of average pupils, they may not be able to mature in their interests because of a lack of skills. In a second-grade class, for example, there are superior pupils who need the necessary word-perception skills and thinking abilities to pursue their interests in materials written for third-, fourth- and fifth-grade pupils. In a fifth grade, many superior pupils need to know syllable phonics, the meaning of the roots of common words, and other learnings in order to satisfy their interests through reading materials written for ninth- and even twelfth-grade pupils.

Despite what many people think, pupils eagerly lean phonics, how to organize an outline, and other skills when they ore aware of the need for help. If the teacher has set the stage for leaning, they ask freely for help in identifying a word or understanding an idea. Pupils take a genuine interest if the teacher helps them to *apply* skills during their first, or silent, reading of new material. They take an equal interest in leaning a new skill if the teacher immediately follows up the silent reading with

help on some need just discovered by the pupil.

There are classrooms where pupils beg for study books which help them learn new *skills.* Moreover, studying word-perception skills fascinates many pupils who become interested in the sounds of words. Learning Latin or Greek roots or discriminating between facts and opinions have become almost like hobbies for some pupils. Obviously, the study of sounds and meanings of words has intrigued the best minds of some adults who have become scholars in these matters.

Thus, skills are intrinsically interesting. But they are stepping stones to success, as well.

When the pupil is freed from the need to attend to word forms, he can concentrate on what the author has to say. Here again, there are specific attitudes and abilities required for (1) finding out what the author says (literal reading), (2) thinking about what the author says (critical, or depth, reading), and (3) using what the author says as a basis for thinking beyond him (creative reading). Learning these attitudes and abilities is a part of learning how to think. Independence in the ability to think with, against, and beyond the author-rather than doing superficial reading-increases interest as the pupil gets increased satisfaction from his reading-study activities.

Awareness of Success.

A child reads efficiently materials on his own at his independent reading level or sometimes below. But never above!

When a pupil reads books, newspapers, and other material at or below his independent reading level,he learns and maintains the "can-do" attitude essential to permanent interest in reading. He sees himself as a successful reader.

Superior readers, too, need the exhilaration of success. Their more mature interests can be pursued through higher level materials-encyclopedias, atlases, advanced textbooks, and other more sophisticated sources.

Every pupil reading at his independent level is concerned with something of interest to himself. Until recently the beginner or the immature reader had few, or sometimes no, readable books available. But today there is a rapidly growing list of books and other materials suitable to his tastes and skills, and there is no reason for someone to try to "wear the wrong size book." An awareness of resources and a continuous estimation of each pupil's independent reading level is necessary to the development of reading interests. The use of informal observations for this purpose is not a passing fad, but an essential.

No thinking person attempts to teach a child to divide whole numbers before he has leaned multiplication and subtraction and before he had some understanding of the division process and its use. Certainly no responsible person expects a pupil to attempt reading a book for twelve-year-olds when he has only the skills of a seven-year-old. He is sure to have difficulty applying word-perception skills to *ancestors, dragon, direction,* and other words of more than one syllable when he is having difficulty with *about, name, show,* and other common words. Moreover, he is sure to become a crippled reader in mind and spirit when he practices lip movement, whispering, finger pointing, word-by-word reading, and other bad habits.

Interest: A Starting Place.

A pupil's interest in *Sabre Jet Ace, Tiger on the Loose,* and other writings of Charles Coombs, takes him to these books. Another pupil's interest in predicting weather takes him to encyclopedias, world almanacs, government bulletins, and, other publications on the topic. A girl's interest in fairy tales and, later, love stories causes her to seek this type of reading. A five- or six-yea-old boy's interest in

things that move takes him to Clemon's *Wings, Wheels and Motors*, Flack's *Boats on the River*, Grosset's *First Book of Boats*, and other stories of boats, airplanes, trains, bulldozers, and other machines.

In other words, the pupil takes interest in a topic, a type of story, or poetry; interest in something he is doing. The interested pupil is not like the lazy man who said he was interested in golf and planned to take it up sometime!

The reading interests of a child tend to reflect his general interests. Within the limits of his reading skills, general interests determine what he reads. Within the limits of his time, they dictate the amount of his reading. And, within the limits of his personality make-up, they dictate the intensity of his efforts to read.

What children ask about and what they read about are not necessarily the same. There may also be a wide difference between a child's maturity in the use of reading skills and his maturity of interests, especially for the significant number of non-readers and retarded readers. Moreover, there maybe a wide difference between the child's current repertory of interests and those which he may be capable of acquiring. Interests, therefore, serve as guides to starting points with children. They are to be first accepted, then developed.

But interest is only the starting point in the pupil's eagerness to learn. First, he is eager to learn phonic and other skills in order to be successful in keeping up with his growing interests. Second, he has a strong desire to learn how to select books he can read with some ease and satisfaction. Third, with a little encouragement from parents and teachers, he enjoys digging a little deeper within an interest. Moreover, he usually takes a keen interest in other authors and materials, which extend his interests.
Interest is only a starting place in learning – but a mighty important one.

Purposes.

The starting place in reading is interest. But interest may lead only to aimless browsing and hit-or-miss reading. Or merely reading to pass the time away. For this reason, it is necessary for the pupil to have a purpose far reading a specific goal for learning. In other words, the pupil must mobilize his energies so that his attention is focused on what is to be learned.

Among other things, a focus on learning calls for the pupil to:

1. Decide what is to be learned from the answering of questions, solving of problems, etc.
2. Keep in mind his purpose while
    a. Seeking appropriate material
    b. Sorting out facts and opinions
    c. Evaluating relevance of statements to purpose
    d. Deciding when enough information has been obtained
    e. Organizing information
    f. Drawing conclusions
3. Select materials that are readable-interesting, relevant, and written with a vocabulary and language structure which permits him to apply effectively his wordperception skills and thinking abilities.
4. Ask for help in applying his phonic skills to unknown words and, later, in interpreting respellings in his dictionary. (It is assumed that these skills are systematically taught-directly and sequentially-as follow-up after each reading activity.)
5. Ask for help in understanding ideas and, later, in interpreting dictionary definitions and other sources of help. (Again, it is assumed that thinking abilities are developed systematically both during and as follow-up after each reading activity.)

Learning is what the pupil does – what he gives himself wholeheartedly to do. He learns his attitudes from his parents, teachers, peers, and others in his environment. He learns his values in the same way. In short, he learns to live in his environment – with the attitudes and values of his admired "figures" and; therefore, his models.

Interests are Learned.

When the four- or five-year-old begs for someone to read to him what an encyclopedia tells about lions or bats, he is expressing an interest. When he asks for Mother Goose rhymes, jingles, nonsense verses, and simple fairy tales, he is expressing other interests. When he browses through picture books, his interests are getting him acquainted with books and their authors. In, free-choice situations, such as these, his interest is on-going and satisfying, far exceeding the short periods of attention and concentration with which popular opinion credits him.

The boy whose father or teacher is a private pilot often becomes a model airplane enthusiast and, sometimes, later on a mechanic or a pilot. His interest in airplanes leads him to encyclopedias, government bulletins, publications of aerospace organizations, and biographies of *Pilot Jack Knight* or Ed McConnell, (*The Sabre Jet Ace*). Hence, interests are learned from the organization of personal experiences which are satisfying. That is, they can be taught.

The Cultural Setting.

The community has an enormous influence on pupil interests and achievement in the classroom. As Plato said many centuries ago, what is honored in a community will be cultivated there. The key to the pupil's learning is the environment in which he lives. If teachers, parents and others in his environment place a premium on excellence, the pupil strives for excellence. If they accept mediocrity, he tends to go along with it. In this sense, learning is caused, regardless of its educative value.

In homes and schools where good reading is cherished, far example, the pupil fears not the egghead label. In other homes and schools where leisure time is squandered in viewing educationally mediocre television and movies, the pupil tends to accept this way of life.

In classrooms where a premium is placed on preparation for depth reading, the pupil learns to stake out his reading in terms of clear-cut purposes which lead him to a self-selected goal. In other classrooms where the motto is merely to read, he learns to do aimless, hit-or-miss reading -with the result mostly on miss. In this sense, too, learning is caused.

Studies of the sociology of reading have revealed that parents from higher socio-economic brackets tend to do more serious reading, have better attitudes toward schools and reading in particular, and are more likely to be active participants in school-community endeavors than parents of lower socio-economic groups. Furthermore, there is evidence that the amount of reading done in a community is positively related to years of formal education and is reflected in the attitudes and experiences which the pupil takes to the classroom.

When interest in reading is evaluated on the basis of active participation, very few adults in the total population are either avid or discriminating readers. One poll, for example, showed that only 17% of the adults in the United States were reading books. About 70% of the adult population read or look at magazines, but with a very few exceptions, magazines of a high cultural level have a limited readership. Although almost everyone gets a newspaper, there are significant variations in the quality of what is actually read. The quality of reading done by teachers is disappointing, too, because it appears to be only slightly better than the average. In order to give full weight to the first goal of reading instruction – *interests* – it appears that we will have to raise ourselves by our own bootstraps.

-o0o-

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1977 pp13,14 in the printed version]

7. Visualization, the Base of Learning-Human Programming, by Harvie Barnard*

*Tacoma, Wa.

Visualization, or seeing in our "mind's eye," may be most simply described as the *ability to form a mental image* of the ideas, actions, objects or whatever we may be hearing, reading, or thinking – or perhaps contacting by any combination of our five basic senses. The development or accomplishment of this particular skill is perhaps unique, if not an exclusive human ability which makes creative thinking or innovation possible. For those who have learned the skill or habit of visualization, the next step in creativity is to develop the art of communication, so that the images of thoughts which have come to life in our own personal "T-V picture tube" may be communicated to others.

Visualization – if you can accept the "picture tube" concept – is not only basic to the concept of new ideas, new things and new methods, but also makes possible the communication and implantation of facts, concepts or beliefs into the developing and/or receptive mind. Again, it is this uniquely human faculty which makes possible the seeing, or "getting the picture," of what the other person is trying to convey. The "receiver" as well as the "sender" must visualize if the message is to be delivered, whether by speech, writing or by any other utilization of the five senses. Whether the message is being heard, or read, or felt, the idea being transmitted must be "tuned in" and the "signals" converted into a visualization if the communication is successfully completed.

When we properly visualize we "see" what we are thinking, we read with true understanding, we think clearly, and (with training and experience), we learn to talk (to transmit verbally), with clarity, force, and conviction. If we do not begin our communication with a clear visualization, we are not likely to accomplish our purposes very well or with the precision and skill needed to transmit a complete or accurate image. This being true, it is clearly obvious that the power to visualize is basic to both learning as well as to the conveyance of our ideas, which is in effect, communication.

It should be apparent from the foregoing that communication-visualization is a "two-way street," applying equally to the sender and receiver – to the teacher as well as the student. This two-way concept may very well be one of the basic essentials of instruction and education in general which should be fully appreciated by anyone who would profess to teach. It therefore becomes incumbent upon everyone concerned with teaching to cultivate the art of visualization communication until it becomes a well-fixt habit – a well established process of both thought and action.

The successful teacher, by this definition, is one who has not only mastered this art, but has also learned by practice and experience to communicate it to those who are learning the students. This mastery is probably best learned by observation, association, practice, and experience. In a word, it is a skill developed thru the devoted application of *apprenticeship,* which means that the process of visualization can be taught as well as learned when the desire exists and the motivation is strong

enuff to overcome the obstacles which traditional processes hate set up to confuse and frustrate the innocent pupil.

Experience has demonstrated that the capacity for memorization can be learned, and that once developed, this skill makes possible the accumulation of an almost unlimited assortment of information. Yet memorization, by itself, does not ensure the ability to communicate, nor does it promise the capacity for thinking, which is essentially the purposeful organization of ideas or facts. Yet there must be an imprint or registration of some basic sensation in order to generate a memory "fix." A series or cluster of these fixes accumulate in the memory until a "picture" is famed.

Thus we can visualize the human brain-nervous-system complex as a computer – an organic computer. This organic computer takes in information thru the five senses and is thereby programmed. This is "learning," and in the same computer concept, the teacher is the programmer and the pupil is the accumulator of the programmed material.

The programming of the human computer, "teaching," presents several obstacles. Besides getting interest, holding attention and providing that magic called motivation, the teacher, (expert programmer), is faced with the ever-present possibility of "circuitry" problems, any one of which-and there are dozens-which may cause our little computer to turn itself off. That is to say, the receptivity of the pupil *is always* a problem, or at least a very important consideration which can and often does make the difference between learning, and being marked "present."

Our basic question now becomes, how do we keep the computer "turned on" and continuously recording while the programming continues? Only one facet of the many diverse elements is involved here, and it will be a fundamental response – an answer which may be applied to any subject and to all learners regardless of the subject, the level of learning, or the age of the pupil.

The material presented *must not confuse the learner.* To avoid confusion, the presentation must not only be clear, consistent and logical, but the material itself must be wholly consonant and as free as possible from conflicting, incongruent and contradictory elements. A good example of this kind of subject matter would be arithmetic, or more broadly, mathematics. When taught with the Arabic system of numeration and in accord with the decimal and metric system of expressing values, it is a logical, reliable, consistent system. There are no exceptions to the "rules" of math, and for this reason it should be readily taught and easily understood. It is, unless certain confusing elements of teaching are introduced.

Problems in teaching math begin with *reading* the problems. The so-called "story problems" are the beginning of both trouble and failure. Any math teacher will confirm this statement. Not only is there confusion and frustration in "reading" the problem, but there is great difficulty in visualizing the problem. But, if the pupil cannot "read" the problem, it will be impossible for him to "see" it, and therefore he cannot possibly solve it because he does not know what the problem is all about.

Can we "see," then, what our problem is in the teaching of reading? Do we truly visualize our problem? If the material, the words which must be "learned," are inconsistent, are put together with

inconsistent, illogical and confusing symbols-how can they be learned, programmed, memorized and clearly understood???

When we teach reading, are we following the fundamental rule of all logical instruction, that *"The material presented must not confuse or frustrate the learner"!* The honest answer to this would of course depend upon the language being taught, plus the usual subjective factors. Some, so research linguists tell us, are less consistent than others, and therefore more confusing. The spelling, for example, of certain languages is known to be inconsistent, confusing, and hence difficult to teach as well as to learn. In fact, English spelling has been described as an unkind type of psychological punishment-a form of "child abuse" – to quote one author and gentleman who has conscientiously sought to teach teachers to instruct pupils for many years.

According to Samuel Clemens, one of the best known American writers of English (as if you didn't know), ". . . . the English alphabet is pure insanity. . .", and is probably the root of the problem. "It can hardly spell any word in the language with any degree of certainty." And our mentor, G B Shaw, has said much more, tried harder, worked longer, spent more, and perhaps accomplished much less than hoped for – as far as straightening out the English alphabet is concerned.

Yet with a reasonable degree of logic and consistency it may be possible – with certain modifications of the Samuel Johnson dictionary of 1755 – to make our present alfabet render a fairly acceptable job. It's not so much a matter of poorly formed symbols or graphemes, but the fact that we assemble them so strangely into homographs, homophones, and homophonographs that the Chinese ideographs and the Egyptian hieroglyphs are more logical by comparison.

And as for visualization, unless you can "see" or visualize the problem, you'll never be able to solve it – because without visualizing it, you'll never really know what the problem is. Are we happier to leave the spelling situation just as it is, and remain blissfully content with the "good enuff" old status quo? 'With T-V to teach us, Elvis and the Beetles to entertain us, social security and unemployment compensation to take care of us, who wants to be literate? I can read, so why worry about it?

That, my friends, is the problem. But to quote Samuel Clemens, "I appeal to you in behalf of the generations which are to follow you, century after century, age after age, cycle after cycle. I pray you consider them and be generous. Lift this heavy burden from their backs. . . . . What is needed is that every letter of the alphabet have a perfectly definite sound. . :' And that, I believe, would be spelling in truly logical fonics, thus giving us consistent visualization, clear communication, and unimpeded learning or programming of the organic computer – the human mind.

-o0o-

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1977 p14 in the printed version]

8. Accent on Teaching, by Emmett Albert Betts, Ph.D, LL.D.*

A Chinese proverb reminds us that "Man who moves mountain starts by taking away one stone at a time." This proverb has a moral for dedicated teachers who wish to improve their professional competence: take one step at a time.

The first step is taken when the teacher learns how to estimate a pupil's reading level. This step is broadened and made secure when she learns how to identify needs: motivation, word-perception skills, and thinking abilities of her pupils.

The next step is taken when the teacher learns how to inventory a pupil's interests which take him to reading. Again, this step is lengthened when she

(1) informs herself regarding the development of interests and other facets of motivation and
(2) learns how to help each pupil to mature in them.

A third step is taken when the teacher learns how to inventory a pupil's word-perception skills. To take this step, she arms herself with professional courses in phonetics, phonics, and perception. 'With this professional armor, she is prepared to give the pupil help

(1) in applying skills during silent reading and
(2) on the learning of new skills immediately following the reading.

The last step is taken when the teacher learns how to inventory concepts and thinking abilities. Once again, she arms herself with professional courses on grammar, concept formation, and the development of thinking abilities. Then she is ready to teach her pupils how to think in listening, speaking, reading, and writing situations.

The last three steps may be taken in any order, but each is necessary for an accent on *teaching* rather than on *tell*ing pupils. First steps may be somewhat faltering and demanding, but before long the teacher is in her stride.

The teacher beginning with a little knowledge and a few skills should not be frustrated by the old saying, "A little knowledge is a dangerous thing." After all, a wit has replied, "But who knows enough not to be dangerous?" Perhaps William Allen White's serious suggestion is more heartening, "A little learning is not a dangerous thing to one who does not mistake it for a great deal."

-o0o-

[Spelling Reform Anthology §13.2 pp182-184 in the printed version]
[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1977 pp14,15,20,1 in the printed version]

9. Illiteracy and the Navy, by Vice Admiral James D. Watkins*

*Chief of Naval Personnel, Washington D.C.
*A talk given at the San Diego, Ca, Chamber of Commerce, June 22, 1977.

It might seem strange to some of you, but the first thing I would like to talk about is the concern we see in many places today regarding the handicapped and the disabled. Recently, for example, the Civil Service Commission issued a strong statement directing various government agencies to do everything possible to employ the handicapped and disabled, and emphasized the need for an affirmative action plan to try to get rid of every obstacle standing in the way of such employment. Most people are aware that the Director of the Veterans Administration, who is a triple amputee himself, has been calling for vastly increased efforts to assist the handicapped and disabled, and everyone must know how the President of the United States feels about these issues – particularly if you have watched him on TV and have seen his words translated into sign language for the deaf.

I'm sure that everyone here shares these sentiments. Certainly I do and believe this kind of effort should get all the support we can give it.

On the other hand, there is another type of handicap that, until recently, received very little nationwide attention, even though it actually disables some 22% of our adult population. I am talking about the handicap of being unable to read. 22% means millions and millions of people. If you find this hard to believe, read the recent report of the U.S. Office of Education and amplified by a recent GAO report on illiteracy in the services. Fortunately the news media have begun publicizing this problem widely. You may have watched the same TV network stories I am familiar with, called "Trouble in the Classroom." When a high school graduate cannot read his own diploma, in English, and is reported to have had the reading ability of the average first grader on the day he was graduated from high school, we have real trouble.

But why am I, as Chief of Naval Personnel, talking about this particular handicap, except as a concerned citizen? Because it is extremely disturbing to me to know that there are young men and women deprived of the right to serve their country in uniform because they cannot meet even the minimal reading standards required. They are good people, not unlike the young man described on television who never learned to read past the first grade level, but says he was promoted every year until he was graduated because his behavior in the classroom was excellent.

You might legitimately ask why we can't take young people like this into the Navy, if we believe in employing the handicapped. The fact is that we do take in a certain number and we provide remedial reading programs at our recruit training centers for those who cannot read above the sixth grade level. I'll tell you a little bit more in a few minutes about our remedial reading effort and about other efforts we are making, but first let we tell you a story that illustrates very quickly the difficulties a poor reader can encounter in the Navy.

Our equipment requires routine maintenance by people who can read technical manuals, and follow precise maintenance steps. If this does not happen, the results can be disastrous and costly. Recently in one of our ships, where an engineman was rebuilding a diesel engine as part of a routine maintenance schedule, he could not read well, and was accomplishing the process by looking at the pictures in a technical manual. When he tried to install the cylinder liners, there was no picture, so he installed them the way he thought they should be. The result was that he installed them upside down. It cost $250,000 to repair the engine. A well meaning individual who cannot read can cause

unnecessary and unwanted problems, to say nothing of the danger to his life and the life of his shipmates.

Another reason we have to refuse many young people who want to serve in Navy uniform is that experience has demonstrated that many of them can't even make it through basic or boot camp, and they have to leave disappointed, frustrated, and in many cases, embarrassed and humiliated.

One study of 23,000 recruits right here in San Diego gives the picture. 8½ thousand of these recruits read below the 10th grade level – that's 37%. 70% of the people who don't make it through boot camp come from this poor reading group.

Some of the recruits studied – some 8%, or almost 2,000 – could not even read at 6th grade level, and accounted for 35% of those who couldn't make it. We discovered, further, that in the extreme case in which the individual reads below 4th grade level, the likelihood of his not making it through boot camp is 64%. One of the graphs provided shows the relationship between reading level and boot camp attrition. The relationship, which shows that the better the reading grade level, the greater the chance of success in the Navy, is irrefutable.

The poor reader is confronted by still other problems. A study of desertion rates reveal some of the frustration they experience. Non-high-school graduates, so many of whom are almost automatically poor readers, represent less than 15% of the young people on their first tour of duty in the Navy, yet they account for 45% of the deserters during that first tour. I am aware that there are many factors involved in the desertion rate, such as job dissatisfaction, inability to advance, and so on, but an extremely important factor underlying these dissatisfiers and so many others is inability to cope with the demands of a job or to compete with others because of a poor educational background.

In mentioning advancement in the Navy, I should point out that we use a system that requires a sailor to study various manuals and take written exams in competition with his peers. If he or she can't read, the chances for promotion are sharply reduced.

What I am saying, then, is that, much as we would like to give the opportunity to thousands of young people who might like to come in to the Navy, but are handicapped and disabled in a very real way by not being able to read, in many ways we do them a serious disservice by accepting them. We raise their expectations to a level that we simply cannot meet in practice, so they we added to the growing numbers of our nation's youth who, like the boot camp drop-out, are discouraged and frustrated, in many cases embarrassed and humiliated. Sailors in such circumstances find undesirable means to break their service contracts, and are doing so at an increasing rate, with the damage that creates for them in the future.

Now let me go back to the question of what we in the Navy are trying to do about the problem.

I mentioned our remedial reading program for those who cannot read above the 6th grade level. This program is fairly successful insofar as it goes, but our resources are limited, and the number we can handle is very small. We have to depend largely on our own Navy people in uniform to do the teaching. That means pulling them from other critical jobs at sea and elsewhere. We do our best and the remedial reading effort does help a handful of young people below 6th grade reading level get through recruit training. That still leaves us with at least two major problems.

One: what of those many thousands who read between the 6th and 10th grade level? I mentioned previously that a large percentage of these never get through recruit training. The Navy Research and Development Center here in San Diego is trying to develop an effective program to integrate reading skill training with job skill training, in the hope that our Navy people will do better both in

school and on the job. This is obviously a tricky thing to accomplish. That makes it even harder is that until there is a dramatic improvement in the reading ability of young people coming into the Navy, we will always be playing catch-up ball. Even that might be O.K. if we didn't have a mission to carry out at the same time – a mission that requires highly trained people – and requires them now!

The second major problem is that the training manuals used even in basic training range in reading difficulty from 10th to 12th grade reading levels. Our Navy advancement manuals range from a low of about the 8th grade level to the college level, with the median *above* the 12th graphic level. The technical manuals furnished for us by contractors range between the 12th and 14th grade level. Because of this, and to try to solve this problem, we are being forced to write new manuals and translate existing manuals into lower reading levels. What a telling indictment of a system that must adjust through short term expedients to accommodate a long term ill of our most cherished resource? Moreover, such an accomodation turns out to be extremely costly – estimates average about $100 per page, and the millions of pages are difficult if not impossible to rewrite because of the continuing explosion of new technology. In this regard there is a practical limit to the degree to which highly complicated equipments can be described in terms that are very simple to read.

Now I realize that we have to keep on trying. We in the Navy want to do our share, but I'm sure that everyone here recognizes what our priorities must be. The Congress of the United States did not establish the Navy for the purpose of teaching people to read. Furthermore, it is not until our young people have experienced a minimum of 17 years of training and education and other influences in civilian life that they enter the Navy. Trying to "cure" handicaps and disabilities at that age is an extremely difficult and time-consuming task, that we have neither the people, the money, nor the time to manage, if we are simultaneously going to carry out our mission of maintaining freedom of the seas and helping to preserve our freedom as a nation.

As Chief of Naval Personnel, I have the responsibility on behalf of the Chief of Naval Operations for seeing that the Navy has the men and women required to carry out the mission assigned. To do this, even in this era of relative peace, we must recruit and train some 100,000 persons a year in order to sustain a uniformed Navy work force almost identical in size to San Diego County's total civilian employment of over half a million. This is a tremendous task, and it is not getting any easier. In the early 1980's we will have far fewer available young men and women than we have today because of the reduced birth rate of the latter 1960's. But the problem is much more acute than the mere lack of numbers of people at the right age. Nationwide, for example, 6 million out of our 10.5 million men 17-21 years of age are *not* qualified for naval service because of mental or physical handicaps, or such factors as criminal records, and so on. Furthermore, studies carried out over the course of many years have revealed time after time that high school graduates are twice as likely to succeed in the Navy as are high school dropouts. So we try to recruit as high a percentage of high school graduates as we can get. Realistically, this reduces even further the number of young people available. For example, this year we have been shooting for 76% high school graduates, but over the long haul we must strive for 84% in order to maintain an acceptable and steady attrition rate.

But now we are finding more and more of even our high school graduates cannot read adequately, so the pool of truly qualified young men and women shrinks to an alarmingly low level. I have here in my hands transcripts of two high school graduates who aspired to service with the Navy, but failed. One was a 19 year old who entered the Navy in Jan. 1976 and was subsequently tested at the 4.2 reading grade level. He lasted five weeks in remedial reading at boot camp, could not improve, and was discharged. Another was a 22 year old man who entered the Navy in Sept. 1976 and was later tested at the 3.3 reading grade level, lasted two weeks in remedial reading, could not improve, and was discharged. If declining trends continue, we have to ask how the Navy is going to carry out

its assigned mission, and we very much fear that these trends are continuing and that they are reflected in other indications of educational achievement. For example, as you can see in the graphs at your table, the scholastic aptitude tests have experienced a drop in average scores since 1968.

Again, a major publisher of college text books is writing these books to 9th and 10th grade reading levels. If college students are having trouble reading material above the 10th, is it any wonder that our average recruit would have the same problem? And this in a day when there is a critical need to recruit and train young men and women to be able to learn how to master the most technically advanced weapons systems the world has ever known.

Why did I elect to speak to you here today about such an unusual topic as reading handicaps? Because you are businessmen and women and you can recognize very quickly that there is no business more important than the business of national defense. Without adequate defense against possible aggression, no other business is secure, be it the business of the marketplace, of education, of communication – the business of any institution or sector of our society. So I believe you have a right to know the dimensions of and problems that could, over the long haul, significantly weaken our ability to provide adequate military defense of our nation. And I believe at the same time, if you will permit me to say so, you have a serious obligation as do I to do whatever we possibly can to bring about a national effort *to prevent* the reading handicaps of which so many Americans are victims, and to help cure the disabilities with which millions of Americans are afflicted.

To ignore or to be indifferent to a national problem of this magnitude is bad business – morally bad, economically bad, militarily bad. It is morally bad because human beings are currently being denied opportunities they have a right to have and deserve. It is economically bad as is all waste of manpower – and we are currently wasting it on an enormous scale. It is militarily bad because its continuance could critically weaken our ability to defend out own country, to say nothing of our ability to help our friends.

I fully realize that I am not alone in experiencing this concern. I am encouraged by what I see as evidence of increasing concern on the part of parents, professional educators responsible for curriculum development, and classroom teachers who, in some situations at least, may have the toughest and most thankless job in the world. My encouragement is sustained by what appears to be a mounting awareness and disdain for the situation. One recent example, reported in the *Washington Post,* cited the case of the Chicago superintendent who held back half of his 8th grade class because they could not read better than 6th grade level. There are many more examples nationwide.

All this cries for establishment of specific statewide high school graduation standards.

I am further encouraged by the conviction that the people of the United States do not want a second class Navy, and to the degree that organizations such as yours alert them to the dimensions of the Problem, they will most certainly respond – forcibly, intelligently. That response will help guarantee that our Navy will remain what it is today, the number one navy of the world.

-o0o-

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1977 pp16–18 in the printed version]

10. Book Review, by Emmett A. Betts, Ph.D., LL.D.

*Adjunct Prof., Univ. of Miami, Reading Research Lab., Winter Haven, Fla.

Wijk, Axel, *Regularized English, Regularized Inglish, A* Proposal for an Effective Solution of the Reading Problem in the English-speaking Countries. Almqvist & Wiksell International, Stockholm, Sweden, 1977.

In 1959, Axel Wijk, Docent in English at the University of Stockholm, published his classic study on *Regularized English: An Investigation into the English Spelling Reform Problem with a New Detailed Plan for a Possible Solution.* This study was followed by his *Rules of Pronunciation for the English Language* in 1966 wherein he presented *An Account of the Relationship Between English Spelling and* Pronunciation. To evaluate the 1977 *Regularized English,* the reader needs access to the above mentioned, previous publications.

Legitimating Phonics

Wijk's main thrust is the need for teaching via *a* phonics method, especially during the transition period from speaking to writing. (p. 9) But there is a dilemma: ". . . the majority of the important irregular spellings – between 400 and 500 in all – are to be found among the 3,000 commonest words in the language. . . " (p. 9)

Frequently in his discourse, Wijk reiterates a well-known fact (among scholars in orthography!):

"Since English is quite unique among European languages in having such an exceptionally large number of irregular spellings among its commonest words, mainly due to the sweeping changes that have taken place in the pronunciation of its long medieval vowel sounds and to its mixed Germanic and Romance origin, it *will not be immediately possible to apply exclusively phonic methods to the teaching of reading."* [Italics mine] (p. 9)

"It is a well-established fact that the teaching of reading presents exceptional difficulties in the English-speaking countries and that this is mainly due to the orthographical system of the language, which is extremely antiquated and confused." (pp. 16-17)

"The chief explanation of this deplorable state of affairs [in beginning reading instruction] is undoubtedly the fact that owing to the large number of irregular spellings among the commonest words in the language it is not possible to lay down any rules far the connection between spelling and pronunciation that would be useful to children who are beginning to read." (p. 17)

"It is only among the commonest words that we find an exceptionally high percentage of irregular spellings, amounting to between 20 and 30 per cent." (p. 17)

"It is a well-known fact that the orthographical system of the English language is extremely antiquated and confused:' (p. 19)

" . . the numerous intricate problems" of regularizing spelling require "a critical examination by eminent experts on the history and development of the English language." (p. 13) Furthermore, ". . . scholars who hold degrees in education and psychology or teachers who have only practical experience of teaching reading cannot always be regarded as fully competent to form an enlightened opinion...." (p. 13)

Regularized Inglish: Transitional Edition

Wijk has focused on five main points:

1. Traditional English orthography has a significant number of irregularly spelled words, especially among the commonly used ones. But Wijk offers this caveat: ". . . it is not surprising if one is misled into believing that English spelling is far more irregular than it actually is." (p. 18)
2. Most European languages can be taught by means of phonic methods because they are based on consistent spelling rules; but English is an exception for many reasons.
3. Regularized spelling increases the consistency of spelling and, at the same time, reduces the number of spelling rules.
4. Regularized spelling for beginners in reading may significantly reduce the hazards in learning to read and, here-fore, *may* escalate reading instruction.
5. *Regularized* spelling is required for about five to ten percent of the words "in the total word vocabulary "(p. 17), whereas the British Simplified Spelling Society's *New Spelling* "leads to a change in spelling in 90 per cent or more of the vocabulary." (p. 20)

Wijk emphasizes the *transitional* nature of his proposal for regularizing spelling.

"By replacing the irregular spellings by regular ones for the period during which children are learning to read, traditional English may be turned into a 'phonetic' language, which can be taught in accordance with definite rules of pronunciation." (p. 9)

"By the aid of this temporarily regularized spelling system we shall be able to teach English reading in much the same way as reading is taught in all other European languages. . ." (p. 9)

Logistics and Strategy

Wijk presents his arguments for *Regularized Inglish* in beginning reading in nine chapters. In Chapter 1, he discusses the limitations of the report by the British committee "to enquire into Reading and the Use of English," headed by Sir Allan Bullock – their seeming overemphasis on "the quality and achievement of the individual teacher" (p. 8), their belief that children can be taught to read by age four and a half to five (p. 8), their failure to consider phonics a method. (pp. 8-9)

"How to Teach Reading by the Aid of Regularized Inglish" is the title of Chapter 2. Here he rules out THE word method and claims that phonics can be legitimated via Regularized Inglish which is ". . . nothing but the regular system of spelling that is inherent in ordinary English and which emerges when we eliminate the *5* to 10 percent of irregular spellings in the language and replace them by regular ones:'(pp. 21-22) Furthermore, he states his opinion, sans research, that normal children at about six years of age, after a year or so, "will immediately be able to read English in the traditional orthography as well . .." (p. 22) Wijk does admit that his rules of pronunciation are somewhat complicated: "Naturally the rules are not quite so simple as in a more completely phonetic system. . ."(p. 22) This chapter is an outright oversimplification of HOW to teach reading.

Chapter 3, "A Suggestion for a Reading Scheme based on Regularized Inglish," is a reprint of a lecture delivered at the 1974 meeting of the United Kingdom Reading Assoc., International Reading Assoc. Wijk's "detailed reading scheme" consists of two books. Book One introduces the beginner to five letters for "short" vowel sounds, 21 simple consonant letters, "various consonant digraphs" (p. 26), the sound of combinations, as *ar* and *or* and unstressed endings, as *-y* and *-ed.* His Book One program is "almost exclusively phonic" but "a few sight words have been introduced now and again." (p. 26)

In Book Two "things become somewhat more complicated" (p. 27): 72 phonic units [phonograms or spellings] representing the vowel sounds of stressed syllables; 17 "representing consonant sounds

and a fairly large number of units representing the vowel sounds of unstressed syllables." (p. 27) This chapter is terminated with "answers to objections.": First, having to relearn spellings, from Regularized Inglish to traditional spelling. Second, tedious drilling on isolated words rather than reading meaningful material. Third, dealing with regional pronunciations. Fourth, failing to learn to read as naturally as learning to speak. Wijk's answers will not be convincing to psychologists and teachers.

Following Chapter 3 are four interesting supplements:
1. Brief survey of "fonic " units to be taught in Regularized Inglish (pp. 35-36)
2. Lists "ov" words illustrating the various "fonic" units to be taught at the advanced stages of the reading "skeme" (pp.37-40)
3. Specimen of Regularized Inglish (pp. 41-42)
4. Copy of letter to the Bullock Committee (pp. 43-50)

A "Brief Survey of the principal present-day types of reading schemes" is presented in Chapter 4. (pp. 51-52) These two pages identify and classify the basic reading series critiqued in Chapters 5, 6, and 7.

The *Janet and John* Books – one set based on the whole-word method and a second set based on a combined whole-word and phonic approach-are the subject of Chapter 5. In the first book, common to both sets, Wijk identified only 3 of 27 words as irregular: *come*, *one, two.* He classified among his regular words: *can, my, play, see, look, down, boat,* apparently disregarding phase stress and spelling variables *c* /k/, *y* /ī/, *ay* /ā/, *ee* /ē/, *oo* /u/ versus /ü/ in *moon, ow* /au/*, oa* /o/. He correctly points out that the whole-word approach in this book is really a tell-the-child-the-word, or rote-memory, one requiring frequent repetitions of the vocabulary.

The second series of *Janet and John Books,* based on a combined whole-word and phonic approach, fared no better in Wijk's critique. In general, his analysis revealed considerable confusion in these materials regarding the categorization of wads as "phonic" and as "look-and-say." For example, the authors considered *with, swing, seen* and *trees* as look-and-say words. Under Wijk's scrutiny, the remaining books of the so-called phonic and sight-word series offered a profusion of confusion.

In summary, Wijk declared:
1. The authors of the reading series "have been content to interpret the term 'phonic word' in the rather loose way which is typical of most reading schemes." (p. 68)
2. ". . . no attempt has been made to introduce phonic rules systematically. . . " (p. 69)

In Chapter 6, Wijk presents an analysis of *The Royal Road Readers* based on a phonic approach. But Wijk concluded: "The treatment of irregular words is therefore not so very different in the *Janet and John Books* and in the *Royal Road Readers,* as one might imagine:" (p. 84) He recommended that "all the irregular spellings can be temporarily eliminated and replaced by regular ones." (p. 85) The need for consistent spelling in beginning reading material cannot be gainsaid.

Lippincott's Basic Reading materials, the subject of Chapter 7, were based on one premise: ". . . since writing was invented in order to render the spoken language, reading consists in their view first of all and essentially in the mechanical skill of decoding, of turning the printed symbols into the corresponding spoken sounds which are language." (p. 86) In this chapter, the author succeeds in spotlighting (a) the complexity of spelling, or phonic, rules for regularly spelled words, and (b) the need for a pragmatic method of dealing with the irregularly spelled ones.

In Chapter 8, a brief "Survey of the chief characteristics of the various types of reading schemes," Wijk clinches his argument that "the difficulty of teaching English reading is closely bound up with

the large number of irregular spellings that are found among the commonest words in the language." (p. 95) He reemphasizes that neither the sight-word nor the phonic approach can be effective as long as the spelling system is riddled with irregularities.

In Chapter 9, "Spelling Reform Proposals," Wijk opines ". . . it seems quite obvious that there is not the slightest prospect under the present circumstances of persuading the English-speaking peoples to adopt a plan for reform." (p. 101) Some of the old reasons why any plans of spelling reform at this time is not possible are paraded:

1. A "suitable" new system has not been devised and approved by scholars and educated people; no realistic alternative plan to traditional orthography is available.
2. Deep rooted conservatism of English-speaking peoples is a deterrent.
3. Partial plans at revision of the spelling system have failed and, therefore, will continue to fail.
4. The intricate nature of spelling revision presents formidable difficulties which have not been overcome by either eminent individuals or societies.
5. The basic principle that anyone who knows the pronunciation of a word should be able to spell it requires a phonemic-based system that necessitates changes in spelling of, perhaps, 99 per cent of the words.
6. The basic principle that a few consistent, definite rules of pronunciation (phonics) facilitate learning to read by both native speakers and foreigners requires a spelling system that embraces the representation of syllable stress, phrase stress, and other features of language.
7. A far-reaching and revolutionary spelling reform is not politically acceptable in a state with a democratic form of government.
8. Transitional inconveniencies, especially by the older generation, appear to doom spelling reform.
9. Transitional spelling systems using either augmented or the Roman alphabet for beginners in reading have been rejected by the education establishment.
10. The ranks of spelling reformers-both scholarly orthographers and dogmatic alphabet eers – are disordered by diverse proposals; hence, politicians realistically ask, "What spelling reform?"

Finally, Wijk makes several claims for his transitional Regularized Inglish:
1. Preserves all the regular features of English (pp. 107-108)
2. Requires a change in the present spelling of only 10% of the vocabulary versus 90% by the SSS *New Spelling* proposal (p. 107)
3. Introduces "a transitional Regularized spelling system, which could make it considerably easier for children to learn to read and write" (p. 107) [But no supporting experimental evidence is offered!]
4. Introduces "a new efficient method of teaching reading" (p. 109) [But transitional Regularized Inglish is a medium, not a method. Although phonic methods may be legitimated to some extent, the rules remain somewhat arcane, complex, and complicated.]

Linguistic Bias.

Wijk has the linguistic bias of some linguists who have a very limited view of "learning to read." He divorces "learning to read" from "reading to learn." In other words, he does NOT think "it is essential to understand what you read in order to call it real reading:' (p. 15) He emphasizes that understanding ". . . primarily . . . is not the essence of reading." (p. 15) Later, he says: ". . . I do not mean that *reading in its full sense* consists merely in being able to pronounce or decode various individual printed or written words." (p. 16) He further divorces "decoding writing into speech" from "decoding the message" by recommending that comprehension be gradually introduced in "subsequent stages in the development of the ability to read." (p. 16)

In short, Wijk appears to be operating on solid premises when he stays within his area of scholarship in which he excells. But he displays unusual naivité regarding the psychological basis of methodology in reading. One more reason for a multi-disciplinary approach to research designed to escalate reading instruction!

Perceptual Learning: Types.

Wijk appears to be unaware of the different types and complex nature of perceptual learning:

1. Category learning: e.g., *at-hat, sit-hit.* Category learning is based on regularly spelled words. (Wijk leans heavily on this type of perceptual learning and rationalizes irregularities by establishing sub-categories as in *all-ball, find-kind, mild-wild, bright-right, by-my, go-no, old-told, saw-draw* vs *caught-taught.)*
2. Cue learning: e.g., *all* in *call-ball, ook* in *look-took,* finale in *me-he-she.*
3. Probability learning: e.g., (a) different sounds represented by the same letters, as *ew* in *sew* (rare) vs *flew*, *oo* in *look* vs *moon, ea* in *eat* vs *head* vs *great, ou* in *out vs soul vs soup vs thought vs cough vs enough,* and (b) different letters representing the same sounds, as *aw* in *saw vs au* in *haul, oy* in *boy vs of* in oil, *oe* in *toe* vs *ow* in *grow* vs *oa* in *boat, sh* in *shut* vs *s* in *sure.*

Probabilities which vary from ew in sew (rare) to ou and ow in *out* and cow need recognition in separating "phonic" from "non-phonic" words. Godfrey Dewey,Axel Wijk, Ruth Oaks, Elsie Black, and others have published statistical evidence on this point as a basis for the evaluation of phonic rules.

Wijk does recognize probability learning in this statement: "Only when two pronunciations of a certain letter or letter group are about equally common, when they occur in the same position, should we consider the possibility of regarding both as phonic, but such is only rarely the case:' (p. 65)

4. Alternation learning: e.g., the several sub-classifications of shifts in phoneme value of phonograms, as *n(a)tion-n(a)tional, autum(n)-autum(n)al.*

(See Betts "Perceptual Learning" in "Sight Words and/or Phonics," *Spelling Progress Bulletin,* V. 16, No. 3, Fall 1976, p. 3.)

One of the chief purposes of spelling reform-transitional or all-out-is to reduce the perceptual learning burden in reading and spelling:

1. More emphasis on category learning (analogy).
2. Redirection of cue learning to the characteristics of words to enhance category learning.
3. Significant reduction of probability learning.
4. Recognition of alternation learning as a problem, especially for advanced reading instruction.

In previous publications, Wijk has presented evidence on the linguistic-orthographic basis of word perception. His view of these and other data needs to be expanded to include the psychological basis which embraces types of perceptual learning, factors in word perception, and other facets of the learning situation.

Concepts of Reading Instruction.

Wijk has reported much scholarly work in his preceding publications. Of course, he has established his own criteria for "regular" and "irregular" spellings – those which fit his *Rules* of *Pronunciation.* But this 1977 edition of *Regularized English* is flawed by his concepts of reading instruction:

1. That the rate of introduction of new vocabulary is not of "very great interest" when phonic rules are the main objective of teaching reading (pp. 69-70)
2. That in learning to read by a phonic approach, the beginner is given practice in "reading of . . . consonants," simply decoding letters into speech sounds (p. 58)
3. That learning the writing system is relatively "simple" For example, Wijk says: "Once children have grasped the principle that letters stand for sounds and that words are farmed by joining sounds together, they have in fact acquired the essence of the act of reading, and from now on

it is only a question of steadily and methodically working their way through the entire system of phonic symbols." (p. 73) This is quite an understatement in view of his previous evaluation of the English orthographic system as being "extremely antiquated and confused" (p. 19) and as having "an exceptionally large number of irregular spellings among its commonest words." (p. 9)

Phonics and/or Sight Words.

Wijk proves that he does not understand the psychology of the so-called word or sight method for teaching beginners. He is quite right when he says that ". . . in the English-speaking countries reading is usually taught by the aid of mixed whole-word and phonic methods or to some extent even by purely whole-word approach." (p. 9) But he is only partly right when he opines: "Well, that's the whole-word method for you in a nutshell. It's sheer guessing." (p. 14) This emotional evaluation was quite right for the one example he based it on.

But word- or sight-methods are plural. Too often in actual practice, the teacher does reduce the word method to a ridiculous, rote-memory process by merely telling the child the word or by the misuse of "flash cards." There is also paired-associate learning in which a word (on one side of a flash card) is associated with a picture (on the other side of the flash card). Or, a V-A-K-T technique is used when a child needs to learn a new word in a specific context. (See Betts "Sight Words and/or Phonics," *Spelling Progress Bulletin* V. 16, No. 3, Fall 1976, p. 6.) The reason for using whole-word methods, as Wijk suggests: phonic, or analogic, methods are not appropriate for studying *of, you, have, was,* and a spate of other commonly used words.

In Review.

Axel Wijk's 1977 *Regularized English,* transitional edition, is based on his two classic studies: *Regularized English* (1959) and *Rules* of Pronunciation *for the English Language* (1966). His new publication, designed as an initial learning medium and which may make a limited spelling reform reasonable and palatable, merits careful reading by educators and psycholinguists because he is a reputable scholar in linguistics who is concerned with the stalemate in spelling reform.

Here, then, are the major points of his proposed initial teaching medium, which are well founded:

1. Traditional spellings are antiquated; therefore, present major hazards to beginners who are learning to read and write.
2. A major spelling reform is quite remote, as evidenced by previous failures of partial or all-out proposals.
3. A spelling system for use with beginners in reading appears to be a possibility – and maybe a probability.
4. The low application/exception ratios of phonic rules impose serious limitations on extant phonic methods and introduce confusions that contribute to reading difficulties.
5. There is an immediate need to legitimate phonics instruction via some type of regularized English.
6. Experimental studies by a multidisciplinary group are prerequisite to spelling reform – transitional or major. (reviewer's interpretation).

-o0o-

Anything a child enjoys doing, he does well. Newell Tune, There is usually behind every achieving student an ambitious mother. N.W.T.

-o0o-

[Spelling Progress Bulletin Winter 1977 pp19–20 in the printed version]

11. Book Review, by Emmett A. Betts, Ph.D., LL.D.

D. G. Scragg. *A History of English Spelling.* New York Barnes & Noble Books, 1974 (Also Manchester Univ. Press, England. Paper back, 1975) pp. 130, $2.15.

This is the third of the Mont Follick memorial series published by Manchester Univ. Press under the competent leadership of Prof. W. Haas, General Editor. Prof. Scragg's history of English spelling beginning with the Anglo Saxons' adoption of the Roman alphabet to the present day is authoritative, readable, amply documented, well organized, and priceless.

In six organized chapters – plus a bibliography, a word index, and a subject index – Scragg demonstrates not only scholarship in depth regarding how traditional orthography became stabilized but also a firm grasp of principle movements for its reform. These chapters include:

1. A highly relevant review of the foundations of written English (orthography) leading to a "stable spelling tradition".
2. An analysis of regional dialects and consequently regional spellings which led to the "disruption of the [English] orthography" and the "collapse of the standard," (the title of Chapter 2).
3. A study of "The French invasion," of 1066, the title of Chapter 3, ". . the last major influence on English orthography. . . " .
4. A report on the "Renaissance and re-formation," the title of Chapter 4, producing "sound-spelling anomalies into English" which "paved the way for other changes based on false etymology" and furthering the stabilization of traditional spelling.
5. A delineation of "The power of the press" (Chapter 5) with emphasis on the general development of "printer's spelling" and spelling reform via many spelling books prepared by orthoepists, lexicographers, and many other scholars.
6. Finally, a critique on "Sound spelling-attempts to minimize orthographic confusion in English by rigid advocates of conventional spelling, the evolution of phonemic alphabets by spelling-reform associates, and the continuing debate over spelling as a mark of an educated person [Prof. Scragg comments (p. 89): " It should be noted that spell here has the simple sense `read' (now obsolescent) rather than the correct meaning of knowing the separate letters of a sound."]

Scragg reviews the complex rules of traditional orthography which some of today's psycholinguists claim is an "optimal writing system." But he recognizes the many anomalies of traditional spelling which handicap native-speakers of English and foreigners in learning to read and write.

He states, for example:
"It is necessary to allow for the polemics of the spelling reform debate, in which one side has long maintained the teaching of reading is unnecessarily hindered by the anomalies of traditional orthography, and that such teaching consequently looms too large in the curriculum. Nevertheless it must be admitted that behind this colourful magnification lies a basically true picture. Our educational system does lay considerable emphasis on the teaching of correct spelling, and the continuing popularity of spelling bees and of spelling questions in general knowledge tests (for example in the BBC's 'Brain of Britain' series) shows that the ability to memorize the traditional spelling of printed books is widely believed to be a mark of full-education."

A History of English Spelling presents a balanced, unbiased view of how traditional orthography became "stabilized" – of how the writing system departed from the consistent representation of speech sounds. In brief, it offers teachers of English and of reading and spelling, as well as linguists, a concise, documented, and easily readable treatise to further their understandings of phoneme-grapheme relationships.

-o0o-

12. Book review by Helen Bonnema Bisgard, Ed.D.

*Denver Co.

Neil Postman, *Crazy Talk, Stupid Talk.* Dell Pub. Co, Inc. paperback, pp. 282, $ 3.95. 1977.

When Editor Newell Tune asked me to review *Crazy Talk, Stupid Talk,* my first glance thru the red and yellow paperback was rejective. The sales-seeking cover seemed aimed at imitating the theme made popular by Edwin Newman's *Strictly Speaking* and other denunciators of today's business, professional, and governmental gibberish.

Paging further, my cynicism increased when I saw that he is worried about "media ecology," and "pollution of semantic environment."

We, the public, are becoming suspicious of writers who piously mouth "polution control," "ecology minded," and "environmental concerns," From my living room window in the view of flowering prairies I see bulldozers scraping down to gravel to prepare foundations for 17 high-rise condominiums. A sign proclaims that the "Environmental Development, Inc." is the contractor. No wonder users of the word "environment" have become suspect.

However, back to Postman's book. In order to do it justice, I settled down in a comfortable chair to see what *Crazy Talk is* all about. Starting with the title page subtitle "How we defeat ourselves by the way we talk – and what to do about it", I read every word to the last page's concluding sentence. . . "men are capable of saying a few reasonable words each day." I didn't read all 259 pages at one sitting, altho I should have liked to because of its captivating style. Even the index was worth attention. By including an index, an author acknowledges that he has said something to which the reader may later wish to refer.

The index signaled items to return to and savor, such as the psychological observation, ". . . there is a self which seems to supervise our other selves. It is the quiet voice which tells us which self to call upon... it is the self to which we attach the name of judgement or reason. . ...Even the selves that take form only when no one else is around presuppose the existence of a social context(or a semantic environment.) For Postman, and in my judgement an appropriate term, "semantic environment" includes people, purposes, rules of discourse, and the actual talk. Pollution of the semantic environment results when one does not consider the totality of the situation. "Stupid talk" is talk that does not know what environment it is in. It is talk from a world of human activity other than that for which the situation calls. "Bad talk" is that which results in evil. There can be no "good" or "bad" language without respect to purpose. Postman, speaking as a philosopher places high value on social order: empathy, tradition, responsibility, and civility.

As a sociologist he puts himself outside the context of any semantic environment so that he may see it from multiple perspectives, and understand why and how people say certain things. Thru "metasemantics analysis awareness" we may minimize the flow of our own crazy and stupid talk. Stupid talk is that which is *unworkable* either for groups or individuals, and crazy talk is *undesirable* from a collective point of view.

As a linguist and author, Postman has herein produced literature which is entertaining while it stimulates the reader to helpful self-discovery.

My review of Postman's book ends at this point. The following thoughts were triggered by statements he made, but should not be ascribed to him.

He deals with spoken language but not with orthographic symbols used to produce a written record of such speech. Since the *Spelling Progress Bulletin's* concern is with improving the alphabetical mechanics of English, I made some observations about spelling when reading Postman's statements. I am like the devotional leader who conducted the campfire worship services one summer. She avowed that she spoke only what was in the Bible, but after she had read to the audience a paragraph, sentence or short phrase from the Good Book, she launched into a lengthy exposition of her own which often had little connection with the original context.

I am extrapolating some of Postman's statements and giving thoughts which they suggest to me.

He says: . . ."we must keep in mind that things do not have 'real' names. A garbage man is not 'really' a 'garbage man,' any more than he is really a 'sanitary engineer.' And a pig is not called a 'pig' because it is so dirty, nor a shrimp a 'shrimp' because it is so small. There are things, and then there are the names of things, and it is considered a fundamental error in all branches of semantics to assume that a name and a thing are one and the same." His interesting discussion continues for a page, and while reading it I thought of those people who object to changing the spelling of a word because they say it changes the word itself. They say that *pheasant* looks like the bird of that name, while *fezant* would not.

In another chapter when speaking of "verbal inflation," that is, the increase in meanings which one word can have, Postman writes: . . . "words come to our attention through the mouths and pens of particular people in particular circumstances. We usually have a fairly good idea of how we are to construe a word from the context in which it is used. This means that there are as many different meanings of, say *friend,* as there are circumstances which call forth the word, and most of us are quite capable of supplying an appropriate meaning to a word according to the circumstances of its use. We know, for example, that the Chase Manhattan Bank commercial does not mean by *friend* what we mean when we say, "My friend Charlie is coming to town' and we know that 'I have a friend in the Mayor's office' means something else still. And that a TV personality referring to 'his millions of friends throughout America' also has something else in mind."

Alphabeteers are concerned over whether a new system will create new homographs from homonyms. They say, what will happen to the distinction between *reign*, *rain,* and *reign*? But Postman would say that try as they will, they would have a hard time thinking of sentences in which these words would be confused, just as they would have a hard time confusing the many words which Postman lists as verbal inflations. The problem of confusion among homophones, homographs, is dealt with in a lengthy article in *Spelling Progress Bulletin,* Vol XIII, no. 4, Winter, 1973, p. 3, "Just for the Pun of it," also *S.P.B.* Vol XI, no. 1, Spring, 1971. The latter is a sequel to a paper published separately by S.P.B. entitled, *"Homophones, Homographs, and Heterographs – the deceitful words of English."*