

**JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL**

**REMEDIAL READING PROGRAM**

Sir Alexander Mackenzie School, Inuvik, N.W.T. - June, 1961.



CURRICULUM SECTION  
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## JUNIOR HIGH SCHOOL REMEDIAL READING

January to June, 1960

### The Need

It became apparent, early in the school year, that many of the junior high schools were working under a rather severe handicap due to widespread reading defects. It was felt that many of them were reading at a level considerably below that which could be expected of students at their grade level. This feeling was borne out by the results of the Gates Reading Survey Test, Form II, administered to all junior high school students before Christmas, 1959; the mean total reading score for all junior high school grades combined was only at the grade 6.8 level. The subscores which produced this total reading score indicated a particular weakness in vocabulary (grade 6.5) and also in reading comprehension (grade 6.5). Only in speed and accuracy did the mean score approach that which one would expect for a junior high school group - grade 7.4.

### The Approach

It was decided that some kind of remedial reading program should be begun as early in January as possible. Only limited instruction time was available, but it was possible to arrange three forty-minute periods in each two weeks for remedial instruction. It was felt that the best results from such a limited program could be obtained if the students were grouped according to reading level, and if the remedial instruction groups were kept small. Therefore, the six classes (114 pupils) were divided into nine reading groups of approximately twelve students each. All groups met at the same time, but in different rooms of the school.

### Selection

The groups were organized primarily on the basis of the total reading scores obtained on the Gates Reading Survey, mentioned above. However, where it was found that a large number of students (enough for more than one remedial group) had scores at approximately the same level, these students were divided into groups on the basis of similar weaknesses; i.e. one group would be formed of students whose main weakness was in the area of vocabulary, another of students mainly weak in speed, etc. Thus there was one group at the grade four level, three at the grade five level, two at the grade six level, and one each at the grades seven, eight, and nine levels. Table I below shows the original group mean scores and subscores for each of the nine groups.

### Diagnostic Testing

As an aid to teachers of the first six groups (all with average total reading scores of less than grade 7.0), the Gates Basic Reading Tests were given to these groups. These tests measure achievement in four types of reading skill: type A - 'Reading to Appreciate General Significance', Type B - 'Reading to Predict the Outcome of Given Events', Type C - 'Reading to Understand Precise Directions', and Type D - 'Reading to Note Details'. The results of these tests have been tabulated in Table II below.

	N	Vocabulary	Comprehension	Speed	Total Reading
Group A	11	4.7	4.5	4.3	4.4
Group B	11	5.6	4.8	6.0	5.4
Group C	12	5.3	6.0	6.3	5.8
Group D	11	6.3	5.8	5.4	5.8
Group E	14	6.2	5.9	7.7	6.6
Group F	14	6.2	7.0	6.5	6.6
Group G	13	7.0	7.0	8.9	7.6
Group H	15	7.7	8.0	10.1	8.6
Group I	13	9.1	9.0	10.4	9.5
Average of Groups A to F	73	5.7	5.7	6.1	5.8
Average of All groups	114	6.5	6.5	7.4	6.8

Table I. Results of Initial Testing (in grade scores)  
Gates Reading Survey Test, Form II

	Type A	Type B	Type C	Type D
Group A	3.36	3.42	4.39	4.29
Group B	4.92	4.92	7.39	6.10
Group C	6.03	6.21	8.75	6.21
Group D	5.29	5.11	6.37	6.44
Group E	4.93	6.50	8.10	8.40
Group F	5.12	4.91	8.32	6.48
Average All groups	4.94	5.18	7.22	6.32

Table II. Results of Gates Basic Reading Tests.  
(in grade scores)



## The Instructional Program

A study of the test results seemed to indicate that our students generally had inadequate reading vocabularies, and moreover failed to comprehend adequately the material which they read. The Basic Reading Tests indicated that the weakest two-thirds of the students read best of all when reading for detail (Types C and D) but very poorly when reading for central thought (Types A and B).

The approach taken in each remedial group, therefore, was one which concentrated on reading for general significance, for meaning, with as much work on word recognition and vocabulary skills as was necessary for understanding the selections being read. In some groups there was also an effort made to read more rapidly, while concentrating on main ideas.

To assist in the remedial program, the Merrill Publishing Co.'s series of Reading Skill texts was used. Group A used Uncle Ben and also the Merrill Phonics Skill text Book D; Groups B, C, and D used Tom Trott; Groups E and F used Pat the Pilot; Group G used the Modern Reading Skill text, Book I; Group H used the Modern Reading Skill text Book II; and Group I, the best group (in terms of reading ability used no workbook, but rather a variety of reading material, drawn from many sources, to stimulate interest in reading, build literary discrimination, and widen the reading interest of the students.

## Evaluation

In mid-June, the Gates Reading Survey Test was again administered. Unfortunately, it was necessary to use Form II again, because copies of Form I were not available. However, it was felt that the practice effect after a lapse of six months would be very slight. Table III below shows the gains made in each of the reading areas tested, and in total reading. The number of students involved in both testings was only 95, since a number had left school for a variety of reasons before June 15th. The mean scores for these 95 on the original test were computed again, but were found to be the same as they had been for the entire 114 originally tested. All the increases indicated were found to be statistically significant beyond the 01 level. That is, differences as great as those would occur by chance alone less than one per cent of the time. It would seem, then, than the remedial program, brief as it was, was still of some value. It seems to have been of sufficient value to warrant a similar program, probably with more time spent on it, next year, and perhaps even suggests that for our students the sixth grade is too soon to stop the formal teaching of reading. Perhaps formal reading instruction on a daily basis should be extended into the seventh and even the eight grades.

	Initial Test		Final Test		Increase	SED
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Vocabulary	6.5	1.36	7.0	1.30	0.5	0.19
Comprehension	6.5	1.50	7.4	1.47	0.9	0.22
Speed	7.4	2.04	8.9	2.49	1.5	0.33
Total Reading	6.8	1.54	7.8	1.50	1.0	0.22

Table III. Results of Gates Reading Survey Test, administered at the conclusion of the Remedial Program.