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## Toward curricular congruence in classroom and remedial reading through strategies for transition

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## Toward curricular congruence in classroom and remedial reading through strategies for transition

### Abstract

One of our greatest challenges in education today is to provide the most effective education possible for children and youth with learning problems. In the past two decades, efforts to meet this challenge have produced an abundance of federally funded programs designed to meet the educational needs of these children. "Special," "compensatory," and "remedial" education programs for children with learning, language, reading, and math problems have been established in virtually every school district in the nation as a means to contribute to the goal of quality education. The National Commission on Excellence in Education indicated a strong concern over problems in education. They concluded that these problems could be corrected provided that our general citizenry and those holding public responsibility cared enough and were courageous enough to do something about these deficiencies (Will, 1986). Evidently the elaborately developed and heavily funded compensatory programs have fallen short of their goal. The purpose of this paper is to identify the nature of problems and limitations in current special programs as revealed through research and authoritative analysis and then to identify potential revisions.

TOWARD CURRICULAR CONGRUENCE IN CLASSROOM AND  
REMEDIAL READING THROUGH STRATEGIES FOR TRANSITION

A Research Paper

Submitted

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts in Education

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University of Northern Iowa

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This Research Paper by: Linda Suttle McClure

Entitled: TOWARD CURRICULAR CONGRUENCE IN CLASSROOM AND REMEDIAL  
READING THROUGH STRATEGIES IN TRANSITION

has been approved as meeting the research paper requirement for the  
Degree of Master of Arts in Education.

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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### Statement of the Problem

One of our greatest challenges in education today is to provide the most effective education possible for children and youth with learning problems. In the past two decades, efforts to meet this challenge have produced an abundance of federally funded programs designed to meet the educational needs of these children. "Special," "compensatory," and "remedial" education programs for children with learning, language, reading, and math problems have been established in virtually every school district in the nation as a means to contribute to the goal of quality education.

The National Commission on Excellence in Education indicated a strong concern over problems in education. They concluded that these problems could be corrected provided that our general citizenry and those holding public responsibility cared enough and were courageous enough to do something about these deficiencies (Will, 1986).

Evidently the elaborately developed and heavily funded compensatory programs have fallen short of their goal. The purpose of this paper is to identify the nature of problems and limitations in current special programs as revealed through research and authoritative analysis and then to identify potential revisions.

### Scope of the Review

This paper examines (1) the nature of current remedial and special education programs designed to address the needs of children experiencing reading failure in the classroom, and (2) suggests solutions to the problems these programs have produced. The programs to be addressed are limited to those resulting from Chapter 1 of the Education Act of 1981 and the Education for All Handicapped Children Act of 1975 (Public Law 94-142).

### Importance of the Problem

We want the most effective education possible for our students. This goal applies to those with learning problems in particular. Of the 42 million children in our public schools in 1984-85, 4% were classified as "learning disabled" and placed in special education programs (Will, 1986a, 1986b). This means that the 1.8 million children classified that year showed an increase of 34,000 students over the preceding one. Another 10-20% of the students who have learning, language, or behavior problems have received special instruction in such programs as remedial reading, migrant education, or bilingual education. All of these programs have been designed to bring students in contact with a more effective teacher or curriculum

There are an undetermined number of students who do not fit into compartmentalized special programs and thus do not receive the special services available even though they show a need for individualized assistance. Many times early intervention could help these and other

children who later develop a problem severe enough to finally qualify for help. In this manner, our current programs address failure rather than prevention.

In both Chapter 1 reading and learning disability reading programs, researchers have determined that the instructional support most often provided tends to be a fragmentation of the literacy curriculum. According to Allington and Broikou (1988), studies indicate that the at-risk child will not only be involved with two different curricula but, when compared with the achieving child, will have less instructional time to master either. Too often, teachers of these special programs experience isolation from regular education staff and tend to work outside the mainstream education process. This separation increases the barrier to efforts to provide adequate and appropriate instruction to resolve the reading failure of these children. There seems to be a need to review current special programs and identify possible changes to make them more effective.

According to research conducted in the past 5 years, there is little evidence that children have improved their reading skills through the pull-out efforts of remedial reading instruction in the Chapter 1 program or those of the resource room for the learning disabled (Allington, 1987; Savage, 1987).

#### Summary and Overview

How can these children and those who do not qualify for assistance but who struggle with reading be served more effectively? What role should these programs play toward that goal? What role



should the regular classroom play? The purpose of this paper is to address these questions through a review of the literature and to examine some innovations in research which can help reshape the reading instruction given the remedial reader.

Chapter 2 presents a review of information from current research that examines the constraints of our present remedial reading programs, ideas for redesigning the two most prevalent ones, and steps that could move us toward curricular congruence in regular and remedial reading programs. Also, Chapter 2 provides information on the nature of the remedial reader as a means toward understanding children's needs and some of the reasons why they experience reading failure.

Chapter 3 presents implications from research for changes in remedial reading instruction that will benefit children. A special feature of this chapter is identification of the role that strategies developed in the supplemental program can play in accommodating the child when learning in the classroom setting. Identification of what seems to be the best learning environment for reading success is made.

Chapter 4 summarizes the attempts to rethink the goals of remedial reading instruction through the design of its services as well as its instruction. Through combined efforts of remedial reading and regular education, children can be served more effectively.

## CHAPTER II

## REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Current research provides information that examines the constraints of present remedial reading programs, ideas for redesigning the two most prevalent ones, and steps that could move toward curricular congruence in regular and remedial reading programs. A literature review reveals the nature of the remedial reader and provides an avenue for understanding children's needs and reasons for reading failure.

Constraints Caused by the Design of Present Remedial Programs

Children termed mildly handicapped are just like their peers considered low achievers, still 90% of children being served in special education are very mildly "handicapped." At least half of that population consists of slow learners, children with second-language backgrounds, children who misbehave in class, those having more absences or transfers from school to school, or average learners in above-average school districts.

This ever-growing number brings with it an astronomical cost even though half is used up by assessment. Assessment demands payment not only in dollars. Teachers who are already skittish about assuming the responsibility of hard-to-teach children find a safe harbor by referring the child who is at the bottom of the class. Higher standards for all students will only compound this process as teachers will feel the pressure of "failing to teach" or "failing to learn."

Some special educators are showing a concern for their jobs and personal identities to the exclusion of contemplating what is best for children with special needs. They ignore the needs of the district to cut through bureaucratic red tape and instead encourage identification of more children as handicapped in the guise that this will bring added federal and state dollars (Shepard, 1987). A group of persons of even greater influence consists of building administrators. They can create a professional climate through personal awareness of instructional alternatives and promote pilot projects for improved avenues of instruction. These changes will take place only if these administrators possess a knowledge of current trends and issues in compensatory education and personal initiative.

A second constraint lies in the need to comply with various mandates, regulations, and procedures which exist to meet the needs of auditors and bureaucrats rather than those of the children needing assistance. The fact that there are two massive programs implies that the children in Chapter 1 have different kinds of reading problems than those being served in reading programs for the mildly learning disabled. Though there is not evidence to support this assumption, children are placed with teachers who are trained differently and have different sets of teaching practices. Teacher-training programs for reading specialists and learning disability teachers are two different camps and the separation continues into certifications, journals, and professional organizations. Both camps do have something in common in their reading instruction but, unfortunately, it is the fact that

neither generally responds to the evidence that research has provided us the past 20 years (Allington, 1987). This research indicated that an emphasis for all students should be on reading relevant books and materials with comprehension.

A third constraint comes from the parents' reactions to the rigid rules and eligibility requirements to which the school must adhere. Sometimes they interpret this as the school officials' reluctance to work with them or to help their child. The school, in turn, may take offense at a parent's request for services and a stronger voice in decisions being made.

A fourth constraint for effectively serving our children is the assumption that they need "different" instruction. Both programs favor the small group, pull-out approach. This is where children leave their classroom and go elsewhere for remediation. Many times they miss reading activities from the core curriculum and sometimes lose instructional time. When there is no coordination of curriculum from special class to the core, the child may end up with conflicting styles of teaching and less time to learn.

A fifth constraint evolves from the school's reading program's rare assumption of responsibility for the child's reading failure. It is a case of blame the victim. Textbooks used for methods courses for special teachers are full of suggestions of reading failures caused by the student. The instructional program is assumed to be adequate, appropriate, and timely even though the Office of Education admitted

in a recent report to Congress that local evaluations are the weakest part of diagnosis.

A last constraint involves the stigma of labeling and segregation from their schoolmates that a child served in special classes may be asked to endure. The consequences of poor self-esteem that may easily result are known to cause low expectations of success both by the child and teacher, failure to persist on tasks, the blame of failure on personal inadequacies rather than effort, and a continued failure toward effective learning.

#### The Redesign of Two Remedial Reading Programs

Without structural changes of major proportions to these two categorical programs and their policies, the reading programs of Chapter 1 and learning disabilities for the mildly handicapped may easily become more of the problem and less the solution. Two major flaws in these two programs are categorization and lack of a central control system for meeting the needs of students. This is evident by those children who "fall through the crack" and do not receive the individualized instruction they need. These children may suffer from abuse and neglect or from grief because of family problems. The restructuring proposed involves both categorical and regular education (Reynolds, Wang, & Walberg, 1987).

To address the flaws of categorization, the restructuring proposed involves a two-part initiative of (1) categorization and (2) a central controls system. They would combine their strength to

establish a general education system that would be more inclusive and that better serves children requiring additional educational support.

A central control system would necessitate the federal government to join with a number of states and local school districts and support experimental programs of integrated forms of education for those students presently segregated. If a waiver strategy could be incorporated, the required rules and regulations could be temporarily set aside. The rights that are now established, such as rights of due process and to Individualized Educational Plans, should remain unwaivered. This would take us one step closer to eliminating unnecessary labeling but continue those rights needed. Other new models could be tried without undermining the hard-won rights of handicapped children. Such models could include children with less severe reading problems being served in innovative ways through more time in their classrooms and with assistance.

Because funding is such a major issue in the educational process of the provision of services to these children, an exemplary funding model could be initiated from state and federal levels which would provide services for children in the least restrictive environment. Current funding practices have hindered effective transition of students back into the regular program as well as collaboration of special and regular curriculums.

Until the educational traditions can be changed and the red tape of bureaucracy cut, schools must look closely at their own programs. They can ask questions such as: (1) What is our school's commitment

to children experiencing reading failure? (2) What is the level of coordination that exists between regular classroom and specialist instruction? (3) What amount of reading instruction are poor readers getting? (4) What kinds of reading tasks are poor readers being given? and (5) What is the focus of the reading instruction they are providing? Finally, schools can collect information on readers' success (Allington, 1987).

Reform at the building level can be accomplished. Administrators often have difficulty utilizing all the resources in their building to produce effective programs. Perhaps if empowered to do so, they would assemble proper services according to individual needs rather than eligibility for special programs.

Curriculum-based assessment offers another approach that would emphasize the assessment of each student's strengths and weaknesses for the purpose of planning instruction. This is in contrast to emphasis on categorization or labeling. Unlike other classes, those involved with individualized programs view momentary learning problems as an opportunity for further instruction. The foundation of curriculum-based assessment is the child's adaptability into the regular classroom. Unlike another assessment commonly practiced, which is based upon the intellectual potential, this method is directly related to the assurance of success in the classroom.

In the actual delivery of educational services to meet individualized needs, teachers and administrators must both be allowed to contribute skills and resources to carry out appropriate

educational plans. This means a shared commitment on the part of those who would serve all children with special learning needs (Will, 1985).

### Toward Achieving Curricular Congruence in

#### Regular and Remedial Reading Programs

When remedial efforts clash with regular classroom teaching methods, the student can suffer from cognitive confusion (Allington, 1986). The child is being asked to learn two different reading curricula. This is happening in the pull-out programs where to read successfully in either program student use of divergent strategies is being required.

Classroom and remedial teachers are both responsible for an underachiever's reading instruction, but neither seems aware of what the other is doing when the program design is a pull-out. Bean and Eichelberger (1985) reported that if the reading specialist would go into the classroom to remediate, (1) more cooperation would spring up between those involved teachers, (2) continuity between the developmental program and the remedial program would increase, (3) classroom teachers would benefit professionally from the close interaction with the reading specialist, and (4) greater student achievement in reading would result. The conclusions of this study were that specialists changed the manner in which they functioned when in class. They focused more on reinforcing skills than diagnosing skill needs. There was more interaction. However, a concern remained for the appropriateness of teaching strategies and materials. The



specialist was viewed in an instructional position, not as a resource one. Teaming was not easy to accept and everyone felt difficulty having two instructors in the room with control becoming a real issue. Bean and Eichelberger (1985) recommended that specific functions of each group be clearly defined before implementing such a program. They also saw the pull-out as a useful program as some students would benefit from one-on-one or small-group instruction.

Still, according to Allington (1986), it is not so much the location of the supplemental program but rather the design which provides for curricular congruence. Coordination is necessary but not sufficient. Congruence is achieved when the remedial efforts support mastery of the classroom reading curriculum. Remediation must allow the learner additional instruction in mastery of the core. Also, in order for learners to develop goal-directed strategies, they must have clear goals and not conflicting ones (Johnston, Allington, & Afflerbach, 1985).

According to surveys given to 600 classroom teachers, 100 reading specialists, and 70 special education teachers, there is communication going on between the teachers but not enough (Conroy, 1988). If given an opportunity for 20% reduction of class size, teachers would choose this over assistance from the specialist or special education teacher. When asked why they would rather do it themselves, classroom teachers noted the obstacles imposed by communication problems, scheduling, classroom disruptions, missed activities, and curriculum disagreements. Conroy further stated that even though teachers

acknowledged the boost that the supplemental programs gave the student, the stigma of being singled out for assistance was a concern. A majority of classroom teachers felt that the special teachers were supporting skills and concepts being taught in the classroom.

In order to achieve curricular congruence, the roles of those involved demand change--particularly that of the specialist (Bean, 1979). The added resource role may demand interpersonal and communication skills of the special teacher even while knowledge of process and methodology of teaching reading will remain important. Instruction and guidance in leadership training and awareness of one's own leadership styles may be of value for the decision-making processes and communication skills which could be necessary.

Further, the factors within the institution which might lead to success or failure must be considered. Staff needs to be made knowledgeable and an emphasis placed on cooperation. No matter how skilled the resource person, institutional policy has a great bearing on the success of that person's effectiveness.

#### Factors Contributing to Reading Failure

Before making instructional decisions as to how best to teach readers who have not experienced success, first an attempt must be made to understand why learning sometimes fails. According to Smith (1987), childrens learning depends on the conditions under which they try to learn. The problem is not that children are unable to learn but that they cannot make sense of what they desire to learn. Effective teachers make themselves understandable to the learner. The

focus must be on teachers' responsibility to be comprehensible rather than on the responsibility of the students to comprehend. At this point, the teachers will stop expecting students to learn something not understandable.

Many times learning failure is blamed on lack of motivation. According to Smith (1987), it is true that learners' lack of interest or inability to see themselves as the kind of people who would pursue that particular knowledge will hamper learning. On the other hand, he states that most of the time learning occurs without motivation, which demonstrates that motivation itself does not guarantee success. Why then is motivation necessary? Samuels (1986) points out that motivation is necessary to keep the student on task long enough to reach the instructional goals.

Smith (1987) states that effort will not take care of learning, as failure can occur even when learners put their minds to it. He says that Bloom is right in his postulation that if more time is spent in studying something, more will be learned, but only for things learned by rote. When learning is meaningful, time is not such an important consideration.

Why, then, should there be specific things that the student cannot learn? Could it be they have already learned they cannot learn? Someone has told them that they cannot learn or, perhaps, they have told themselves. Smith (1987) says they have excluded themselves from the club.

The brains of children are frequently blamed for what is really the failure of instruction in our schools. How can failure to learn be avoided, so that schools are not places where students are taught not to learn? Instructional decisions should be based on the following concepts: (1) The brain is always learning, (2) learning does not require coercion or irrelevant reward, (3) learning must be meaningful, (4) learning is incidental, (5) learning is collaborative, (6) the consequences of worthwhile learning are obvious, (7) it always involves feelings, and (8) learning must be free of risk (Smith, 1987).

Instruction that exposes for students the thinking that goes on in the minds of learners is valuable (Samuels, 1986). This is called explicit instruction. By demonstrating and explaining through a step-by-step manner, teachers can help handicapped students master basic skills.

The nature of poor readers is portrayed through children who suffer from passive failure, according to Johnston and Winograd (1985). Poor readers have deficits in three areas: cognitive, motivational, and affective. In the cognitive area, poor readers experience difficulty seeing the relationships between elements in tasks. They do not seem to have accurate perceptions of the frequency of their successful attempts nor do they monitor their performance. In the second area, motivation, they have consistently low expectations for success and feel any success they do experience comes from luck, ease of task, or other external factors. These factors are always

beyond their own control. They do not see success tied with attempt but with ability, something they feel they have very little of. It follows, then, that they are not motivated to persist in the face of failure.

Finally, in the affective area, poor readers are observed to suffer from low self-esteem, exhibiting such behaviors as making negative statements and few positive ones. They seem very much aware of their sense of ego involvement but are not aware of their learning strategies. Poor readers frequently are placed in materials that are too difficult for them and the resulting failure leads to "learned helplessness" (Bristow, (1985). The difficulty they experience in monitoring is only compounded by inappropriate materials.

The nature of poor instruction makes its own attributions to the outcomes of children's experiences of success and failure. If teachers value their own ability to teach more than their self-concept of caring and concern, problems will result. Teachers with such priorities are more likely to blame failure on some aspect of the child than on their own instruction. If failure is attributed to a lack of effort, there is a strong tendency to punish. Generally, in reading, successful children are treated differently than those struggling; this, in turn, reinforces the poor readers' beliefs that their failure should be attributed to low ability. This is the most crippling factor involved. Teachers have been observed in the classroom giving these children less time to answer by supplying the answers or simply shifting to another child rather than adjusting the

question, rewarding inappropriate answers, being more critical and praising these children less, expecting less in performance, and providing more brief and less informative feedback while using more time-consuming methods of instruction, even when time is limited (Allington, 1983). As these children observe their teachers' differing behaviors to successful children and themselves, they perceive it as further evidence that they are inadequate.

The poor learning environment, too, can produce attributions associated with passive failure. The nature of assessment tends to make classrooms competitive and ego-involving. This, in turn, seems to be a reflection of teachers' perceptions of the nature of ability. When the teachers' corrective feedback takes on a high risk, which occurs when teachers reward students for guessing teachers' opinions, the children begin to respond to the feedback rather than to stated task demands. Their goals are more ego-defense than if they were simply being asked to give their own opinion. A meta-analysis of 122 studies showed the relative effectiveness of cooperation, cooperation with intergroup competition, and individualistic goal structures (Johnson, Maruyama, Johnson, Nelson, & Skon, 1985). Cooperation was found to be more effective than either of the other two. When instruction involved intergroup competition, it was more effective than interpersonal competition and individualistic efforts.

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## CHAPTER III

## IMPLICATIONS FOR INSTRUCTION

A fundamental goal of education is to teach children to become self-directed learners who can plan, evaluate, and regulate their own skills. This goal requires teachers to help children become strategic learners and to facilitate a lasting desire to learn (Paris, Lipson, & Wixson, 1983). The independent reader, like the independent learner, exhibits behavior that is intentional and requires a set purpose. This behavior goes beyond being competent in skills. The reader must also know when to choose one skill over another to attain a specific goal. Metacognition, the awareness of the utility and appropriateness of various actions, grows as reading improves. As the record of successes grow, so does the reader's self-esteem and motivation.

Poor readers often exhibit behaviors of being powerless, dependent, and unmotivated. However, these students can be empowered by instruction that encourages self-management and self-motivation. Remedial reading programs, despite their inability to remove the impairments of the handicapped child, can still be reasonable in their thrust to help children. They can be helped to learn a vast array of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that will enable them to become independent learners and lifetime readers through instruction of general thinking skills and self-assurance to use these skills flexibly (Paris & Oka, 1986).

### Every Child A Strategic Reader

Strategic readers have two characteristics which greatly enhance independent learning: (1) they are enabled to read independently to discover new ideas, and (2) they are empowered with the self-confidence to read with enthusiasm. They combine cognitive skills with motivational will. Research points out three important variables that help children become strategic readers: (1) knowledge about the task itself, (2) control of effective strategies which increase comprehension, and (3) motivation which affects attitude and expectations and thereby increases efforts and pleasure (Paris et al., 1983).

#### Knowledge About the Reading Task

Knowledge about the reading task effects the reader profusely. What children know can be divided into three types of knowledge: (1) knowing that; (2) knowing how or how to proceed; and (3) knowing when and why (Paris et al, 1983).

Knowing that is declarative knowledge that can include facts such as the purpose of the reading task. It deals with the beliefs one has about one's own abilities. Children can have vague and sometimes inaccurate conceptions of reading. They can be aware that English text is printed left-to-right but be unaware that comprehending and not simply decoding is the goal of reading.

Knowing how involves the procedures needed to read, such as skimming, finding the main idea, and generating hypotheses about the

meaning. Strategic readers know how to use various strategies to improve, modify, or ensure their comprehension.

Strategic reading is knowing why strategies are effective and when they should be applied. These types of conditional knowledge tell readers what plans are appropriate. Effective plans coordinate effort with the goals and nature of the task and insure the appropriateness of the strategies.

### Control of Effective Strategies

It is not enough to be aware of reading and thinking strategies; children need to be able to use these strategies effectively as they read (Cook, 1986). They need to put their knowledge into action. They can learn to control their thinking by focusing on decisions which must be made before, during, and after reading. Before reading, they can evaluate the task and make plans based on their own knowledge and teachers' guidance. During reading, they can control their thinking by pausing to summarize their ideas and to evaluate their understanding. They can use context, reread, and scan ahead to check their ideas. They need to recognize when they need to get outside help from their teacher, reference books, or classmates. Lastly, they need to control their understanding after they have finished reading. Strategic readers do not simply close the book. They ask themselves if they understood the text, if they agreed with what was written, if they enjoyed it, and if it made sense. If these answers are not positive, they need to reread selectively.

### Motivation and Attitude

Without the proper motivation to use the knowledge stated above, children will not become strategic readers. They need encouragement to use effective effort to apply good strategies. They need to learn that unsuccessful attempts at reading do not mean they are lazy or stupid, but that they did not have the necessary strategies at their disposal. Strategic readers take pride in their efforts and are satisfied with their comprehension. This encourages them to acquire more knowledge and attempt to have more control over their reading. This cycle can further motivate them to use this type of thinking and learning throughout the curriculum (Vaughn, Bos, & Lund, 1986).

### Teaching Strategies for Transition

Teachers play a central role in helping children develop strategic reading behavior. Teachers need to create instructional procedures that are consistent with cognitive development in order to promote reading comprehension. Paris and Jacobs (1984) stated that research has revealed three types of accomplishments that coincide with children's learning. They are as follows: (1) attention to schemata, the organization and activation of knowledge at appropriate times, (2) the recruitment and effective application of cognitive strategies, and (3) use of metacognition, the awareness and monitoring of variables that influence thinking. They are all of equal importance in reading.

Each of the following methods offer an alternative to traditional ability-based reading groups. Their strength lies in their

encouragement of dialogue which gives the opportunity for cognitive strategies to be discussed, modeled, and diagnosed. This provides for assessment and instruction in cyclic fashion while supplying a diagnostic rather than competitive approach. One instructional method in developing strategic and motivated readers is modeling thoughtful reading. Simply observing an expert reader thinking aloud or talking about strategies will probably not be adequate to change a student's reading behavior. The student needs to understand the procedure for using the strategy as well as the value of it. Modeling will show the student what to do and how successful comprehension can depend on the use of the appropriate strategy. Through modeling, teachers take the time to read aloud from their favorite books, react to quality literature, and share motivational information with their students about the purpose of literacy (Winograd & Johnston, 1987; Smith, 1981). Durkin (1978-1979) reported classroom observations showed little explicit reading instruction was provided intermediate children on how to use comprehension strategies. The need for modeling not only the physically observable aspects of reading but also the invisible mental processes are emphasized by Duffy, Roehler, and Herrman (1988). This type of modeling provides explicit instruction which minimizes the chance that students will misunderstand the teacher's intentions.

Direct explanation of cognitive strategies is an essential factor in effective instruction (Duffy & Roehler, 1986; Gaskins, 1988; Rosenshine, 1979). Students need to know appropriate strategies to be used before, during, and after reading (Paris et al., 1983). The

power of this approach was demonstrated by Paris and Oka (1986) who used direct explanation of certain strategies with third and fifth graders in whole-class situations resulting in improvement in metacognition and comprehension.

Lastly, Reciprocal Teaching as a means of scaffolded instruction and the manner in which it provides for dialogue is a promising tool for teaching strategies and how to use them (Palincsar, 1986; Palincsar & Brown, 1986). Patterns of effective dialogue during Reciprocal Teaching include (1) teacher support of the students' contribution at the idea level, not word level, (2) adept use of students' ideas and linking them to new knowledge, (3) focus and direction given to the dialogue, (4) instruction made explicit by the teacher, and (5) evaluative statements made in such a way as to change the complexion of a student's response from negative to positive.

Modeling, direct explanation, and Reciprocal Teaching These methods can be used in combination with reading and writing instruction. Their versatility includes use with any size group, with varied reading abilities, and almost any established reading program.

Strategic reading requires students to analyze reading goals, plan available actions, monitor comprehension, and regulate strategies. How do teachers assess how well students are doing in these areas? They do it through modeling and talking about strategies used and why; then by encouraging students to share their knowledge of strategic behavior or "making reading public" (Paris et al., 1983).

### Creating a Learning Environment To Facilitate the Active Reader

The improvement of reading instruction involves more than an understanding of the theory of the reading process, more than an array of effective instructional techniques, and more than mountains of appropriate instructional materials. Each is a necessary component toward improvement but there is an essential factor missing. This factor is the climate which surrounds reading instruction and the impact it has upon it. According to Winograd and Smith (1987), we can separate this climate into three interrelated facets: (1) accountability, (2) the way reading is viewed, and (3) how views of reading affect teachers.

#### Accountability

In order to ensure accountability, specific goals must first be set and then performances monitored to see if these goals are reached. Therein lies the problem. Reading is such a complex activity that the range of goals which could be defined is staggering. At one time, reading was thought of as a sequence of skills to be mastered; once learned, they would ensure the learner's becoming a proficient reader. This view completely ignored the goal of developing students who love to read and did not provide for an effective method of instruction. Still, we see evidences of it lingering in the commercial reading materials as well as the objectives lists included in almost all standardized tests. This lulls the public into a false sense of security as it implies that reading is a hierarchical series of subskills.

### The View of Reading

How reading is viewed has a direct effect upon the development of the poor reader. When reading is thought of as a competitive activity, what happens to the children who experience unsuccessful reading and failure? It may easily lead to these students' belief that failure is inevitable in the competitive arena. For some, it becomes preferable to be passive, apathetic, rather than to take the risk of trying and failing. In this environment, the child becomes detached from the goals of reading to learn and to enjoy. Children become more concerned about avoiding embarrassment and failure than with learning to read (Johnston & Winograd, 1985).

Cunningham (1984) reports that the most important task facing the teacher today is to find ways to instruct students that will keep their growing preoccupation with ability from interfering with their willingness to learn. The results of research clearly point to the value of using noncompetitive learning structures whenever possible. Mastery Learning promotes the students' pursuit of success by asking for mastery of subject-matter content to a required level of competency. The standard for final performance remains constant while the amount of study time may vary. This promotes self-comparisons and emphasizes skill efforts while reducing the importance of ability in achievement.

Slavin (1983) reports that Cooperative Learning methods have been evaluated in the classroom for over 12 years and repeatedly have resulted in academic success. There are positive effects on outcomes



of race relations, attitudes toward academically handicapped classmates, self-esteem, and predispositions to cooperate in other settings. These social and attitudinal outcomes affect poor readers in a very positive way. There are two primary components involved in Cooperative Learning: (1) a cooperative incentive structure, and (2) a cooperative task structure. Cooperative tasks do not always involve cooperative incentives. Slavin (1987) reports that Cooperative Learning techniques can reorganize classrooms into exciting, high-achieving environments. In Cooperative Learning, the initial teaching comes from the instructor. Students who grasp the concepts more quickly can reinforce what they've just learned by explaining concepts to teammates who need help. It encourages a heterogeneous group to share ideas or reinterpret what the instructor has presented. Teams do not need to compete but individuals may when they compare their own scores against their previous ones. The team goals are the motivation for students to care about how individuals on their team are doing. Slavin has developed four Student Team Learning methods, all of which provide for team rewards, individual accountability, and equal opportunities for success. Student Teams Achievement Divisions and Teams-Games-Tournament can be adapted to any grade, while Cooperative Integrated Reading and Composition provides for reading and writing instruction in third through fifth grades. Teachers seem pleased with their students' achievement and social outcomes, while students seemed pleased with learning a lot and having fun in the process.

### How Views of Reading Affect Teachers

Winograd and Smith (1987) expressed a concern over the belief that the most important role of teachers in reading instruction was to follow someone else's instructional decisions and put them into practice. Following decisions made higher up in the chain of command takes the role of decision makers away from instructors.

Effective teachers use a variety of teaching strategies to meet the demands of diverse students, contents, and goals. These strategies define the roles of teachers and students to meet particular learning objectives (Strong, Silver, & Hanson, 1986). Still, teachers may perceive the attempts of staff development programs that present new teaching strategies as assaults on their personal teaching styles. They may feel they cannot have nor do they desire to have someone else's teaching style.

Style is a complex set of preferred behaviors and prompts a teacher's way of speaking, methods of classroom organization, techniques for handling conflict, and the rate of progression used in content areas. It grows through years of teaching experience and reflects a system of values.

Unlike style, teaching strategies are certain techniques which research can prove or disprove as effective means to enhance the chance of academic success. Even though teachers' style may be reflected by a selection of strategies, styles can never be considered a set of strategies. These selections may depend upon three factors: (1) the demands of the content area, (2) the needs of a particular

group of students, and (3) the teacher's own quest for a rich and varied teaching style. This quest may be the most effective defense against teacher burnout educators can have. New strategies can provide new visions of their content areas while offering opportunities for creativity and autonomy to reassert themselves in the classroom. According to Strong, Silver, and Hanson (1985), the best way to enhance student thinking is not through special courses on thinking or rewriting curriculum, but rather to provide teachers with strategies that elicit as well as model various thinking styles.

Unlike the constrained nature of skill lessons, the divergent nature of student response in strategy lessons leads to the unexpected. This lends intrigue for both children and teacher (Atwell & Rhodes, 1984).

Zahorik (1986) suggests teachers ought to have a limited but realistic repertoire of teaching methods. By using methods compatible to their own teaching styles, they may alter their behavior but not beyond the limits of their own valued methods. This repertoire should be able to accommodate the different learning styles and goals of students' needs, and still not put impossible demands on the teacher.

## CHAPTER IV

## SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The greatest challenges of reform in remedial reading programs today are rethinking the goals toward curricular congruence with reading in the regular classroom. A review of the literature revealed that poor readers can become independent learners through two changes: (1) instruction of learning strategies for transition, and (2) a redesign of our present remedial and regular reading programs.

Through major structural changes, the reading programs of Chapter 1 and learning disabilities for the mildly handicapped can combine their strengths with those of general education. For this change to occur, the federal government will need to join with a number of state and local school districts and support experimental programs of integrated forms of education. New models could be tried without undermining the hard-won rights of handicapped children. Such innovative models have an additional advantage. These program changes would overcome the adverse effects of current labeling, pull-out instruction, and lack of curricular congruence (Allington, 1987; Pearson, 1985; Reynolds et al., 1987; Will, 1986).

The goals of remedial reading instruction should be to teach children how to use strategies in regular classroom settings, and also to help children learn to transfer strategies to several different tasks. Establishing cognitive and motivational goals will help

children to understand the benefits of reading and to develop life-long readers.

Better learning environments are being established where cooperative efforts, modeling, peer tutoring, and direct explanation combine with traditional methods (Covington, 1984; Duffy & Roehler, 1987a, 1987b; Paris & Oka, 1986; Slavin, 1983; Winograd, 1987).

There is a growing awareness among educators and researchers that a new agenda for reading instruction is worth attempting. Through combined efforts and redesign of present remedial reading programs and regular education, children can be served more effectively.

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