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Construction of a set of exercises to improve four skills of oral expression.

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Service Paper

CONSTRUCTION OF A SET OF EXERCISES TO IMPROVE
FOUR SKILLS OF ORAL EXPRESSION

Submitted by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION
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One of the aims of the primary school program is to develop children's ability to express themselves intelligibly to others. Before the oral language can be developed, however, the children must have a desire to express themselves. After this desire has been nurtured the child must learn to speak in a comprehending manner. He must know that which he wishes to talk about, he must keep his thoughts on the telling of that story, he must tell it in an orderly manner, and speak so that others will enjoy listening to him. These are but a few of the many skills he must become capable of if he is to maintain satisfactory expression.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

It is the aim of this study to design a set of exercises to stimulate children's growth in oral communication.

JUSTIFICATION OF THE PROBLEM

It is evident that much of the children's creative expression develops through oral communication.

This study attempts to design a set of exercises that will develop the children's ability to express themselves freely and clearly and that will encourage the hearty participation and cooperation of all the class members while sharing their news items.
CHAPTER II
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SUMMARY OF RESEARCH

Research on Oral Expression in Life

Communication is a very real part of the daily life of every man and woman. The interchange of thoughts and opinions is possible through numerous kinds of expression. Of the possible mediums of expression perhaps the most efficacious is social intercourse.

"Oral language makes social intercourse possible. Through its use the majority of the ordinary everyday affairs of life are handled... Socially oral language is of the first importance." Not only does man use oral language to carry on the daily affairs of his life, but, as Jespersen claims, "All human beings are impelled to seek the society of others, to feel themselves in intercourse with them: and that is where language helps. To man is the state of nature there is little that is more uncomfortable than another man's silence."

Social intercourse is then a very precious possession to man. It is important that the quality of speech be sufficient enough to satisfy the needs to which it is put.

Only through clear and precise language can one accomplish the goals that one sets out to meet through oral expression.

The qualities of speech can be divided into several categories. Strickland has listed the ones that probably first come to mind. "Clarity


of speech and language has a number of aspects. It involves accurate articulation of sounds, clear enunciation, pronunciation which can be understood, usage which fits commonly accepted standards, and choice of words which carry the meaning that is intended. When Bender scrutinizes the pronunciation of modern day American speech he concludes that, "Until schools pay more attention to speech - as much attention, it is suggested, as is paid to reading and writing, we cannot anticipate a general improvement in pronunciation habits."

Another quality of good speech is suggested by Rassmussen. "We have learned through psychology that better speech is necessary to better thinking, and that better thinking makes better speech..." Speech can be perfectly audible, grammatically correct and yet contain so little thought that Murphy is moved to say, "Whatever the cause something must be done to overcome the poor expression of American boys and girls. They must begin to talk, not 'jabber'; and it is the job of the English teacher to train them to talk." Here again it is the schools that are asked to develop good speech habits in American culture.

There is one more aspect of speech that is pertinent to this study. Although oral communication may be technically good and contain good thought yet it may still lack an essential. Mabie expresses this well by reminding

us that:

"Language is the communication of ideas but communication is not alone a matter of words. Manner, facial expression, and attitude also convey thoughts. To make someone understand exactly what we mean is a far more subtle process than merely choosing words and arranging sentences logically. The whole person expresses thought."

It may be added here that the person expressing the thought must take into consideration the experience and background of the listener. Unless the listener can understand to some degree the nature of the subject under discussion, the whole purpose of oral communication is lost. This places some of the responsibility upon the listener. This goal of complete understanding is very difficult to obtain. Perhaps this is so because it is so little cultivated.

The importance placed upon oral expression, then, would not appear to be trivial. According to Hatfield "The exchange of ideas and information is the very life blood of society. The art of communication must therefore occupy a prominent place in any modern curriculum." That this art has been neglected cannot be denied. It cannot, however, be attributed to one cause. Perhaps one of the biggest reasons is stated here by Mabie:

"We have been accused of losing in modern life our ability in the pleasant art of conversation. It is no longer necessary for a group of people to rely solely upon conversation for the pleasurable use of leisure time. There are fewer and fewer opportunities for the child to learn in the home the art of conversing agreeably and interestingly."

From the preceding it would seem necessary to conclude that the school must place more emphasis on oral expression through a plan of development.

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2/ E. Mabie, op. cit., p. 22.
Research on Oral Expression in the Classroom

In recent years school systems have been striving to equip the children under their guidance with adequate skill in all of life's aspects, not just the classroom skills. The importance of training for life's social aspects is stated by Shattuck. "There is an important place in life, of course, for the forms of discourse but obviously a program which neglects the teaching of the social types such as conversation, discussion, and informal group arguments, is inadequate to equip for important situations in life."

Painter's statement is true not only for the English instructor but for all classroom teachers as well. "The functions of the English instructor are to train the whole individual, to prepare him to live with himself and others, to enable him to meet life-situations, and, if possible, to make him a contributor to, not a parasite in, society."

When the need exists for better growth in oral expression as was pointed out in the last section, it is not surprising that Strickland writes: "One of the avowed purposes of the primary school is to improve language skills and usage of children." That this purpose includes work with oral expression is attested by Zyve. "The giving of school time for free group conversation is now a general enough practice in primary grades so that the free conversation period may be seriously considered as one of the potential means of


producing facility in oral expression." Strickland goes on to describe the goals of the language skill program.

"The first goal in language development in the modern school is to free the child so that he talks easily and confidently. Until a child will talk freely the teacher has little opportunity to learn the level of language development he has attained and what help he needs. It is impossible to improve the language of a child until there is some language to improve."

Once the children have been encouraged through a friendly atmosphere to express themselves Seegers suggests that they "... should be given abundant opportunity for and practice in transmission of their thoughts" through oral language which "... is the child's first contact with language." So that this program will be geared to life situations it is not planned and organized in advance. Dawson describes it as "The children's informal, spontaneous, purposeful expression of ideas in connection with all the learning activities of the school day."

The question might arise as to why conversation during classroom time is of any more benefit than the conversation at home and on the playground. McKee observes that:

"Perhaps this ignoring of conversation as a fundamental instructional job is due to the idea that this ability is easily learned outside of school, or at least during the first year of school attendance. Even a casual observation, however, of the conversation which people carry on certainly does not support this view."

1/ Ruth G. Strickland, op. cit., p. 93.


Informed writers say a closer observation shows that high-school and college graduates are "...criticized as being unable to think clearly and logically and to express their thoughts in well-chosen, properly enunciated words arranged in interesting and clean-cut sentences."

A program for oral expression would seem to be justified, then, in an elementary curriculum. It is suggested that it should be a free and informal program but Mabie warns, "Spontaneous and copious expression will not automatically develop effective and interesting use of language.... There is no justification for leaving the pupils language development to chance or to the incompetent judgment of immature minds."

There are two reasons why this warning against a completely free program is considered essential here. The first one as Mabie states it is:

"Because of the complexity of the use of language in life situations, the process of acquiring an adequate and beautiful means of expression is as difficult as it is important. Training in the use of language should advance with the building of a foundation in attitudes, valuations, and interests because the effective use of language is a part of the entire question of personal relations."

The second reason as given by Raubicheck includes only the phonetic training of children but could also apply to all the basic factors essential to good oral expression in the primary grades.

"It is important to grasp this significant fact that our phonetic training even in the first grade is not so much education as re-education. This is perhaps the most significant reason why unconscious imitation, so glibly referred to by educators

2/ E. Mabie, op. cit., p. 11.
3/ E. Mabie, Ibid., p. 3.
who have never attempted to check its results does not and cannot work. The time for unconscious imitation of a speech pattern is past by the time the child reaches school age."

It can be concluded, then, that although the oral program must be conducted in a free and friendly atmosphere and that a child's performance must be spontaneous and unrehearsed in order to work toward the ends in mind, nevertheless there must be guidance and instruction in order to obtain any growth. Among the possible areas of growth Hildreth claims that "The purposes of language instruction at school are to refine language usage, to improve language habits in speaking, writing, and comprehension to correct deficiencies in speech and writing." McKee continues:

"This early beginning of definite and skillful teaching of oral expression may help to prevent the birth of many errors, to remove others before they have the opportunity to become fixed, through practice, and to promote desirable growth in oral expression that will serve as a sound foundation for later instruction in written expression."

Whatever the deficiencies of speech happen to be, nevertheless, according to Hildreth, the basic aim of the program "... is to insure continuous progress in linguistic development for every pupil throughout his school years, even though neither the rate of progress nor quality of work will be the same for every child."

The teacher, then, must nurture a friendly and helpful atmosphere in which she may spot and diagnose speech deficiencies and then go to work to


2/ Gertrude Hildreth, op. cit., p. 51.
correct them. Betts points out that as an educator arrives at a teaching problem he is "..... primarily concerned with the collection and the selection of specific units of instructional material which may be useful in the development of adequate language skills, with the evaluation of methods of instruction, and with the development of devices for the appraisal of pupil learning." In the field of oral expression there seems to be very little published material of this nature available to the classroom teacher.

Research on the Development of Speech of Children

Before a program for the development of oral expression in elementary children can be discussed there must be some information obtained about the nature of the speech development of the primary grade children. Hildreth states: "The child's most potent language influences are found in his home, family, and neighborhood associates." If this is so then Mabie's statement which follows points out the need for work in oral expression if there is going to be later development in the other language arts areas. He says that:

"We have been accused of losing in modern life our ability in the pleasant art of conversation. It is no longer necessary for a group of people to rely solely upon conversation for the pleasurable use of leisure time. There are fewer and fewer opportunities for the child to learn in the home the art of conversing agreeably and interestingly."

When a child is first born he begins to use oral expression in order to communicate his desires and needs to his parents. Hildreth describes it


2/ Gertrude Hildreth, op. cit., p. 35.

3/ E. Mabie, op. cit., p. 22.

4/ Gertrude Hildreth, op. cit., p. 29.
as follows:

"Language develops in response to internal needs of the organism and environmental stimulation. Communication through language is essential for survival, a phase of social adaptation that begins in earliest infancy. Language and thinking develop coordinately. The learning is incidental, motivated by the child's need to communicate his wants. Language continues to evolve from babyhood to adulthood without a gap or break regardless of formal teaching, so long as the child is mentally competent and has normal experiences in a stimulating environment."

According to McCarthy, by the time the child enters the kindergarten, he "... already has a very well-developed and a very elaborate system of language habits which serve as the basis for his more formal education. He can express himself orally — all his needs, wants, and ideas — his every action finds expression in some form of language." Because of this Raubicheck suggests that "The establishing of right attitudes in group situations is not so much a question of beginning with a new subject, as it is taking into account all the previous training and building upon it."

It would seem logical to assume that the child, once accustomed to the school situation, would grow very rapidly in his oral competence. And indeed Hildreth's statement that "Social approval from the group plays a large part in influencing children to write and speak better" would justify such an assumption.

Nevertheless, the facts are quite to the contrary. Harrison says that "There is an inadequate body of data concerning language development in the

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2/ Letitia Raubicheck, op. cit., p. 17.


early school years but the studies mentioned are sufficient to show that there is a leveling off of the curve of several aspects of oral language growth at the early school period." Among the reasons given for the phenomenon are the limitations of the school day to speech, the nature of the process of reading, and the lack of stimulation of the children, one to another. The first of these reasons, limitations of the school day to speech, is a decided handicap for any speech development work. Nevertheless much can be done through a continual concern about speaking habits throughout the school day.

There is no doubt that the simple sentence structure and vocabulary of the basic readers has some effect upon the sentence structure and vocabulary of the children. Since this is only a temporary condition the effects should be only temporary, too.

That children of similar ages do lack stimulation for each other in language development is observed by Smith when describing studies of twins which ".... indicate that children who can maintain satisfactory social relations without mastery of conventional language are not stimulated to attain such mastery." This fact might discourage the now prevalent segregation by ages in all things and encourage more mixed age activities.

There have been several records published of the conversation of seven-year olds. From Biber's records it was observed that:

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"One outstanding impression from a close study of the behavior records is the rather surprisingly mature character of most of the conversation of the children. The content, of course, reflects the age and intellectual immaturity of the children but the sentence structure, vocabulary, and idiomatic use of the language, are often, quite comparable to adult conversation."

At first glance this evidence would tend to disagree with Harrison's statement. However he was concerned with continual growth and not evaluation of the speech of children.

At least, then, it may be assumed that most seven-year-olds are able to express themselves if they wish to. The use to which they put this ability is well described by Biber. "By far the greatest part of the seven-year-old's language is utilitarian and communicative in type, serving as an important part of the social life of the group."

Now this social use for language indicates specific characteristics of the seven-year-old group. McCarthy observed, "... that language develops in accordance with the child's needs." That the need to communicate with others is evident in the seventh year is confirmed by Piaget.

"Finally, between 7 and 8 the desire manifests itself to work with others. Now it is in our opinion just at this age the egocentric talk loses some of its importance, and it is at this age .... that we shall place the higher stages of conversation properly so-called as it takes place between children. It is also at this age, that children begin to understand each other in spoken explanations as opposed to explanations in which gestures play as important a part as words."

1/ Ibid., p. 116.
2/ Dorothea McCarthy, op. cit., p. 299.
Piaget explains that the conversation of children "... may be divided into two large groups - the ego-centric and the socialized. When a child utters phrases belonging to the first group he does not bother to know to whom he is speaking nor whether he is being listened to." Socialized conversation is then divided into categories as follows: adapted information; criticism; commands, requests, and threats; questions; and answers.

Now that the beginnings of socialized conversation have been placed at the seven-year-old level, it is of interest here to see of what quality this conversation is. From the observations made by Baker it is concluded that: "Whatever the reason, children in the second grade as far as a general discussion is concerned are still almost entirely individualists." Hildreth, too, finds that: "Children show in their language usage a tendency to deal with things near at hand, the things they perceive and can experience for themselves rather than abstract concepts or matters remote from their experience."

Nevertheless this desire to communicate with others is an important stage in the development of children. Until this time children have had little need to make themselves understood. Not only that but, as Piaget points out, "Conversation between children is ... not sufficient at first to take the speakers out of their ego-centrism, because each child, whether he is trying to explain his own thoughts or to understand those of others, is shut

1/ Ibid., p. 9.


up in his own point of view." Adults have a cognizance of the appalling density of the human mind, and they make an effort to understand and be understood. Piaget continues, "Children have no suspicion of all this. They think that they both understand and are understood." This, however, does not continue. Piaget reminds us that: "The effort to understand other people and to communicate one's thoughts objectively does not appear in children before the age of about 7 or 7½." This effort results in the increased ability to make oneself understood. This fact is observed by Hildreth. "The six-year-old still expresses himself incompletely so far as sentence structure is concerned, but by eight years his increased skill in thinking logically enables him to express his ideas more fully and precisely." Piaget has also noticed increased skill from the seven- and eight-year-olds. "The absence of order .... is more or less exceptional between 7 and 8. Between 6 and 7, it is the rule. It seems pretty certain, therefore, that the capacity for arranging a story or an explanation in a definite order is acquired some time between the ages of 7 and 8."

It would appear then that the child will have reached a maturity in and around the seventh year where he becomes interested in and can develop in the art of communicating with others. Although the foregoing would tend to picture the development in rather exact steps, Hildreth would point out that

1/ Ibid.
2/ Ibid., p. 126.
5/ Gertrude Hildreth, op. cit., p. 34.
in this as in many other areas of development:

"Individual differences in language skills and the ability to profit from instruction in rhetoric are as pronounced in this area as in any other. Among eight- or ten-year-old children will be found, at one extreme, those whose language expression is so very limited that they cannot write or speak a simple sentence; at the other, children with adult vocabulary and sentence structure."

Nevertheless the pattern of development is similar in all children.

In review, at the beginning of the school experience the child's language is egocentric. Later his language becomes more socialized, and he begins to make a great effort to have real understanding with his listener. He is still largely involved with the things close to himself. As the children progress through the elementary school, however, Baker has noticed that:

"Their contributions in general discussion turn from a consideration of that which is immediate to them to a consideration of that which is more remote from their own physical environment."

Research on the Needs of Second Grade Children in Oral Expression

It can be seen from the previous section that a real desire for socialized speech comes sometime during the second grade level. At this period the child becomes faced with many problems. He needs help. Jenkins says, "By the time the pupil reaches the second grade .... lack of expressiveness should lead to very definite attempts to help the child .... Students of mental hygiene assure us that this type of child is more likely to become a problem case because of his lack of expression." What is found in most classrooms is described by Baker. "General free discussion by pupils in a class is

regarded by many, if not by all educators as an approved school activity and as a means of learning." The effects of such periods upon the growth and development of the children cannot be measured precisely. It is certain, as Baker describes it, that, "Children reveal themselves through general discussion, thus permitting the teacher to know them, their needs, and their problems far better than they would without such indirect means." It would seem, however, that some of the more specific problems could best be met with more direct means. Some of these problems are to be discussed in this section.

It has been stated before that the second grader has become aware of others. From Gesell comes the observation that: "Although given to self-absorption the 7-year-old is not an isolationist. He is becoming aware not only of himself, but of others." He goes on to say, "They need speech to make social contacts and to clarify their thoughts." Brueckner, too, sees needs that require attention. "...such factors as timidity induced by the presence of the group, having nothing to say, wanting to talk all of the time without having anything significant to say, speaking too fast or too slowly, and similar items many of them aspects of personality, contribute to faulty growth of oral speech." No second grade program in conversation would completely overcome all these needs. The second grader is still a


2/ Ibid., p. 134.

child and must develop his personality before some of these factors can be wiped out. It is Strickland who stated that "The ability to really forget oneself and enter into the thinking of others is a mature response." In the second grade the goal is not perfection - rather it is developing so as to make oneself understood. Strickland states it very clearly. "Intelligible language is the first need in the primary school so that the child can express himself with ease and with confidence that he will be understood. ... The polishing and refining of language ... comes later. In the primary school intelligible, useful language is the first requirement." There is no doubt that an oral language program which would give more guidance than the free discussion period, would be of benefit in the primary grades. Not only do the children need a great deal of assistance in expressing themselves well to others, but they enjoy the exercises. This is confirmed by a statement from Spoken English.

"It is between the ages of seven and eleven that children derive most benefit and possibly most pleasure from their speech lessons. At this stage they enjoy the actual making of the sounds and the forming of the shapes necessary in their reproduction and, lacking self-consciousness and with rapidly awakening intelligence, they are able, with their limitations, to practice all forms of speaking with comparative ease."

It is apparent here that the speech lessons referred to pertain to the improvement of elocution. These kinds of lessons must go hand in hand with lessons in organizing and stating thought clearly. Smith believes that the two must be taught simultaneously. "In the process of growth, language power

1/ Ruth Strickland, op. cit., p. 114.
2/ Ibid., p. 106.
and thought power mature together. They are mutually dependent one upon the other. Successful teaching of language, therefore, holds these powers in constant relationship and refuses to divorce instruction in language from improvement in the actual expression of ideas.

Not only is the child's oral language ability enhanced by this development. McKee holds that:

"The thinking he does in order to compose his ideas for speech is largely the same as that which he must do later when he composes in writing. If he learns to do this thinking and composing well during the early years, his later progress in learning to express his ideas well in writing is considerably enhanced."

Children need help in organizing their thoughts. Baker's statement which follows would indicate that there is another area in which the second grade child is especially weak. "There seems to be little meeting of minds in discussion, in the deepest meaning of the word, at the second grade level." From previous evidence given this would seem to follow along very well since the child has just begun to notice others. Although it is early yet to expect any deep understanding between children, still this is an area which must be given consideration in the designing of an oral program.

McKee emphasizes the importance of developing good listeners when he says, "It is obvious that a good conversationalist not only discusses adequately his own ideas but also listens carefully to what other participants have to say." The emphasis placed on good listening also helps the child who is

1/ Paul McKee, op. cit., p. 28.
Strickland says:

"The confident, aggressive child is helped to see his need for taking turns in talking and for listening and reacting constructively to what other children are saying. The timid, insecure child is drawn into interests in which he can lose himself and is guided into informal work and play situations with other children."

There is need to get a more balanced amount of participation from all the children. Zyve admits that there will be as much variation in the extent of talking among children as there would be among adults. However in a language program, "The methods we use are not even potentially adequate unless we can make the silent ones speak, the too voluble more restrained, and the normal maintain their position." This is essential if the needs of all children are to be met.

The free discussion period can be made much more effective if the pupils know what they are aiming for. Smith says, "It is not enough that children should have opportunity merely to use language in the course of carrying on activities in the classroom. They must be taught specific methods of procedure." This cannot be done in a tense or stilted atmosphere. The best medium by which the children can develop in oral expression, as Strickland puts it, "... is an atmosphere in which language can flourish. Talking must be legalized ..." and there must be "a happy wholesome relationship between the teacher and children and among the children themselves. If a friendly and sympathetic feeling can be built among the various members of the class many of the shy, retiring children will be encouraged to partici-

1/ Ruth Strickland, op. cit., p. 94.
3/ Dora Smith, op. cit., p. 77.
4/ Ruth Strickland, op. cit., p. 100.
Raubicheck mentions that "Since the first quality of a good voice program is audibility, and since audibility is the response to a desire to share with the group the more lively the child's sense of group participation is, the more readily will he adapt volume and phrasing to the group need." The needs of the second grader are scattered and individualized. Whatever the goals picked, the program must be both adapted to the group and run in the atmosphere afore mentioned. Painter would add one more qualification necessary for a good oral program. "The plan for learning oral techniques as the means to self realization and more effective communication should be progressive so that the work of each semester will be guided by specific goals."

Research on Requirements of an Oral Program

Most teaching must be done in the light of the measured abilities of children in the area to be taught. Competent writers in the Encyclopedia of Educational Research say that "Considered from the standpoint of the classroom teacher, research is valuable mainly to the degree that it aids in evaluating teaching method and improving classroom practices." Such research has not been wholly possible in oral expression. There have been no adequate tests built to measure the capacity of children's language. As a research problem Betts points out three difficulties.

1/ Letitia Raubicheck, op. cit., p. 91.
2/ M. Painter, op. cit., p. 349.
"The Research problem involved in the study of oral language activities is three-fold. First, defensible techniques for the collection of the data must be developed. Second, valid procedures for the analysis of the material collected are essential. Third, the techniques for the interpretation of the data must be justified."  

Writers in the Encyclopedia of Educational Research, however, suggest a line of procedure.

"Work on the oral aspects of English in the curriculum has been limited in the past by the fact that complete and accurate records of oral-language activities have not been available for analysis. Experience with the recording equipment in numerous quarters makes it apparent that it opens up great possibilities for curriculum investigation in language."

This undoubtedly would be an acceptable technique for collecting data. The writers go on:

"The problem of sampling appears at two levels. One involves the establishment of the fact that the nature of the language material itself is truly representative of the situations under which the skills would be likely to appear. The second aspect of the problem of sampling involves the extent of the material which must be utilized in order to secure a statistically reliable result. Since language usages do not lend themselves particularly well to the typical statistical procedures used in determining reliabilities, the technique of cumulative sampling has been used effectively as a substitute."

Here the first two problems as stated by Betts are given possible solutions. The evaluation of the results would depend largely upon what purpose the information was to be put. There is very little evidence of any great strides being made toward a set of standards in expression. Hosie, in constructing standards for oral compositions, concluded:

"Any school or system of schools which desires to make use of a set of composition standards ought to work out its own. The place to begin is probably with the form that was employed in


Chicago, namely, narrative based upon personal experience, since this is the most common form of expression among children. The process of selection by means of a consensus beginning with individual classroom teachers is an indispensable one."

Here is recognition of the subjective nature involved in scoring compositions. The set of standards which was built included the personalities of the teachers and school system as a whole.

There has been in the past years a trend toward informality in the oral programs of schoolrooms. McKee wrote:

"The formal and traditional type of thing such as orations, reciting poetry, and declamation have little to do with instruction in important oral composition. They should be dismissed from the program because of their low relative value in the affairs of modern life, and because of their lack of contact with the child's normal activities."

As a comparison is made between the type of program described here and the one given by Hildreth, it may be concluded that the authorities of language instruction, at least, see great value in a more informal and meaningful program. "The modern school makes every attempt to give meaning and purpose to language. The thinking side is stressed rather than mechanical perfection in grammatical usage." McKee, too, concurs in the desirability of this trend. "Of great importance is the regular conversation lesson or period in which the children are given opportunity to talk informally about some topic or experience with which they have come in contact." The trend has stressed meaning in all classroom activities. At times the school has become so much a scene of real life experiences that the learning has been neglected or obscured. Nevertheless in the case of oral expression there

1/ Paul McKee, op. cit., p. 95.
2/ Gertrude Hildreth, op. cit., p. 50.
can be little learning unless all is applied to realistic situations.

Hatfield describes this as follows: "The art of communication can be mastered only through experience in actual, normal communication, and mere practice in speaking and writing is valueless unless it arises directly from real communication and issues promptly in further communication."

What are the requirements of a program that can have a lasting value in real life situations? There seem to be three areas here that must be considered. First, there must be a consideration of the proper atmosphere in which the learning can take place; second, the subject matter must stimulate genuine enthusiasm and interest in the children; and third, the proper areas of instruction must be selected in the light of the needs and abilities of the children.

The atmosphere must be one which is informal and in which the children know that they are permitted to say what they feel. However, the learning situation must be more than just everyone saying what they please. There must be a strong feeling of sharing of one another's thoughts among the children. Baker describes the effects of this upon the child.

"Undoubtedly all would agree that it is valuable for a child to have an opportunity to talk of things which appeal to him, to talk of his own activities and experiences, and to express his own opinions. He should do this, moreover, in a situation where he has an audience, and where he has reason to feel that some importance will be attached to what he says and to the opinions he expresses. The investigators in this study definitely had the impression that many pupils derived genuine satisfaction from the opportunity to express themselves in free discussion."


Gesell, too, sees strong effects upon the child when the discussion atmosphere is good. A teacher in second grade "By setting up sympathetic two-way relationships ... exerts a powerful influence on the emotional organization of her pupils. Personality development is of great importance at this age." If the atmosphere is going to be one of sharing it must have the children's genuine interest and sincerity. Seeger's statement may help clarify the meaning of genuineness. "Genuine expression occurs when a person says what he wants someone else to understand, and especially when he wants someone else to share his interest."

Once the child feels at ease with the group he must be motivated in order to participate in the discussion period. Raubicheck claims that a sharing atmosphere can be a motivating force.

"The whole rounded voice program should be motivated through a desire to share rich and varied experiences; it should include definite training in how to make this sharing more effective by an appropriate technique; and lastly, progress should be measured through activities calling for creative expression, both individual and group."

This desire to share experiences is not in itself the motivating force. It, too, must be motivated. McKee feels that "The difficult task is to stimulate them to want to express the ideas they already possess." Mabie also feels that: "From the viewpoint of the language teacher, a unit of study is not satisfactory unless it stimulates in the natural course of the study...

1/ Arnold Gesell, op. cit., p. 134.
3/ Letitia Raubicheck, op. cit., p. 91.
4/ Paul McKee, op. cit., p. 102.
the desire to speak, to listen, or to write for definite purposes." The child must be made to want to share his ideas and opinions about a particular subject with the others of his class. Surely the particular subject under discussion would have some bearing on the amount of participation that could be gotten from the various children. Dawson's statement which follows seems to place considerable emphasis upon this point.

"The experiences provided by the language-composition curriculum should be selected in the light of the prevalent interests and activities of the pupils... To ascertain the natural interest of young children is, therefore, an important step in the planning of the curriculum if effective and appealing oral and written expression situations are to be attained."

It becomes necessary then to determine the interest areas of the children in the classroom. Although it might seem that these interest areas would vary with the geographic location Dawson's study shows that:

"... the principal significance of a comparison of data in rural and urban communities lies in the agreement in the children's interests as revealed in their verbal expression. A well-conceived curriculum should deal with topics of general appeal, and the children's interests in games and sports, pets, family and friends, school, and parties are about equal in both environments."

These areas agree very well with Smith's findings that: "The favorite subjects of second-grade pupils were animals, games and play, and home and family life."

Whatever the purpose of the lesson may be, if it is to have a strong appeal for the children it must have as its subject matter something in which all the children have at least a rather strong interest.

Now the atmosphere has been described and methods of motivation have

2/ Mildred Dawson, op. cit., p. 435.
3/ Dora Smith, op. cit., p. 81.
also been given. What, then, are the fields of instruction that most meet the needs and requirements of the youngsters? Smith sets up some very essential requirements for a good elementary school program.

"The challenge to the primary school, therefore, is to maintain a classroom environment sufficiently stimulating to expand the child's vocabulary and to stretch his language powers; to insure sufficient opportunity for small-group discussion within the class as a whole and for personal growth in expression to offset the limited type of language experience afforded by the basic reader; and, without deterring the spontaneity of the child's expression, to furnish positive help and standards in the use of language in direct relationship to all the experiences of the school day."

Besides this overall picture Jenkins gives more specific duties of the primary grade teacher.

"The teacher in the second and third grades is therefore interested in providing rich experiences as a basis for oral language in developing the inexpressive child to become a contributing member of the group in arousing awareness of the group in the ego-centric child, and in learning how to increase vocabulary, sentence control, and power of sustained thought."

Merely providing a time in which the children can talk, however, is not enough according to Smith. "They must be taught specific methods of procedure."

In Baker's study there was no guidance given to the daily conversation period. Only the freedom of speech was provided for and the observers recorded their results. One of the conclusions made from this study is that, "To the extent that some degree of order and sequence are deemed to be desirable in children's discussions, it appears that more adult participation and leadership would be required than prevailed in the present study."

1/ Dora Smith, p. 57.
2/ Frances Jenkins, op. cit., p. 33.
3/ Dora Smith, op. cit., p. 77.
Before order can be considered, however, the child most definitely has to have something to say. To help him in this problem McKee suggests that:

"Since the fundamental purpose at this point is to acquaint the child with the importance of having something to talk about and the value of various sources of ideas, emphasis must be placed upon encouraging the child to tell what he knows and to recall ideas which he has accumulated in various ways."

Lunden tells of a classroom experience in which the pupils were learning to make short talks. Emphasis was placed on talking when they had something to say. The results were good. "Throughout the term we held to our original plan that no one need speak unless he has something to say and wished to tell it. The result was encouraging in that most of the children had something of value to relate and all participated to the extent of giving several short talks." Knowing that they had something worth telling seemed to encourage all the children to participate.

Once the child has clearly in mind what he wants to discuss he is then faced with the problem of arranging it in his mind so that he can present it in a comprehensive fashion. Jenkins suggests that "At times two or three steps may be indicated before expression is given to the complete experience. This is the beginning of outlining and may be in outline captions or in sentence form." Once the story is firmly set in their minds they are not so apt to wander off into story after story. As they listen to one another's stories they become increasingly skilled in determining where one story ends

1/ Paul McKee, op. cit., p. 101.


3/ Frances Jenkins, op. cit., p. 31.
and another begins. Strickland points out how listening becomes an integral part of the program. "Listening and speaking need to be thought of together because one cannot function satisfactorily without the other." But all matter of listening will be to little avail unless the speaker talks clearly and audibly to his audience. Strickland defines enunciation as "... a matter of clear-cut handling of beginnings and endings and of giving each syllable its full value." Then at least through this training the child will begin to develop toward the far away goal of true understandings through oral expression.

There seems to be some variation of opinion as to how much instruction can be given at one time. Of the emphasis placed upon language habits Mabie says, "It is important that the points of emphasis be few and vital and that opportunity for repeated attention to them be given." Painter, also, feels that: "Emphasis on one technique at a time and progressive development are equally important in oral expression." This is all too true for it is enough to ask the child to remember the story and tell it in order without worrying him with other details. Beverley says that:

"Training in the relating of personal experiences brings the children face to face with the fundamental language problem, that of giving expression to the impressions made upon them by the experiences of life. This is a task requiring concentration and conscious effort on the part of the children, with the right and

1/ Ruth G. Strickland, op. cit., p. 114.
2/ Ibid., p. 108.
4/ M. Painter, op. cit., p. 349.
natural reward of appreciation on the part of their classmates when they succeed."

Because of the difficulty of the task, then, it must be made as simple as possible for the child. But at the same time Raubicheck says: "It is at once the charm and the handicap of speech work that the entire program must be worked over at the same time and that no one part of it can proceed in a vacuum." This also is very true. It remains for the educator to select an area that needs particular attention and give a few lessons in that and then move on to something else. As the pupils progress they will become more able to handle more than one idea at a time. The lessons must progress in difficulty. Hatfield says, "In order that the pupil may gain the confidence and the clarity of mind that comes from success, his experiences must be arranged in a carefully graded order of social and intellectual difficulty."

The requirements for a good program in oral expression are many and varied. There is a lot of work to be done in determining the best means by which to cultivate good growth in oral expression.

Research on Desired Outcomes of an Oral Program

An oral program may bring about harmony within the classroom and may stimulate participation from all the classmates, but if it does not have any carry-over value outside of the classroom and in later years the time has been wasted. The measuring of its effect is impossible, however, and it must be assumed that if an ability has been nurtured in the classroom it may have lasting quality.

1/ Letitia Raubicheck, op. cit., p. 54.
2/ Wilbur W. Hatfield, op. cit., p. 7.
The abilities sought after are many. Hildreth feels that: "A major objective in language teaching is to draw out the children, to encourage them to express their thoughts freely..." Raubicheck thinks that language teaching must encourage this expression to be adequate. "The need of the individual for self-expression and for adequate social adjustment to live in a community are the determinants in any living course of speech training." However, this development of social adjustment through expression is just the beginning stage in the development of oral expression. Durrell says, "Initiative and self-direction should be the final objectives in language teaching." Certainly there are many who speak quite fluently but have no purpose in conversation except the act itself.

Once oral language has been developed we must give children skill in the use of it. Otherwise there can be but little conveyance of meaning from the speaker to the listener. What Wasson says is true of the teaching of social studies is true also of any teaching. "If reliance is to be placed on language as a means of disclosing attitudes and ideas the teachers of social studies will have to be teachers of language as they already must be teachers of reading." Though they know the subject matter very thoroughly they may not be able to make others understand. Watts describes linguistic ability as,

1/ Gertrude Hildreth, op. cit., p. 51.
2/ Letitia Raubicheck, op. cit., p. 52.
"... not merely the ability to memorize words and phrases with a view to being able to reproduce them more or less mechanically upon receipt of a given cue; it is the ability to make intelligent use of words for the purpose of defining our thoughts and feelings as clearly as possible to ourselves, and of expressing them, when necessary, as clearly as possible to others, in order to share our experiences with them...."

This can be done by giving them skill in expressing within the classroom the things they wish to share. Whether these skills will be the same as the ones they will need in future life we have no way of knowing. Concerning this Mabie writes, "We can only give pupils a method of attacking the language needs which they now have. Through these immediate problems in the use of language, we can develop perceptions and powers which will function as the pupils meet social requirements later in life."

Durrell says these skills must be made automatic. He explains that: "The peculiar thing about these skills is that they are of little value until they become automatic."

Speaking of the outcomes of a speech program upon the elementary child Raubicheck concludes that:

"As a result of his experiences in the elementary school the child should develop poise, both mental and physical. His attitude toward the speech situation should be one of friendly interest and frank responsiveness. He should endeavor neither to lead nor to follow so much as to share. He should consider conversation as an exchange of ideas not as an opportunity of exhibitionism."

It is thought that these should be the prime motives of the experiences in oral expression in elementary school.

1/ E. Mabie, op. cit., p. 5.

2/ D. D. Durrell, op. cit., p. 149.

3/ Letitia Raubicheck, op. cit., p. 16.
CHAPTER III

PLAN OF THE EXPERIMENT
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PLAN OF THE EXPERIMENT

It was the purpose of this study to construct a series of exercises for the purpose of improving oral expression. The exercises were designed to cover a period of six weeks. Each week was devoted to one unit of study. The exercises were planned to cover approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ hour of time. Fifteen minutes were devoted to direct teaching and presentation. Fifteen minutes in the morning were devoted to practice of the skill in the functional situation.

The units of study were planned around those areas which it was thought would be of the most value to the class. These areas were determined after observing the discussion of the children for two weeks. During this time all the discussion difficulties of the children were jotted down. Of these the most predominant were as follows:

A few children talked too frequently and too long.
A few children didn't talk at all.
They did not know what they were going to talk about when they began to speak.
They talked too loud or too soft.
They did not explain things that the rest might not understand.
They did not stick to the point.
They did not wait until others were finished talking.
They wiggled as they spoke.
They did not listen to each other.

The conversation period from which these observations were drawn was set up as follows: The class was given a 15 minute period each morning in which
to share their news. One of the children was in charge of these periods for
the whole week. It was his duty to call upon the various members of the
class to come before the group to speak. It was also his responsibility to
keep order and settle any unnecessary disturbances. Comments from the lis-
teners were not at all discouraged unless they detracted from or disturbed
the speaker and his story. It was found that the presence of the child be-
fore the group helped to remind the listeners that they were, for the moment,
expected to listen.

From this observation period it was decided that the following units
would be the most helpful in improving the conversation of the class.

1. Be sure you know your story.
   a. Know what you are going to talk about.
   b. Know all the parts of the story.

2. Tell one whole story.
   a. Stick to the point.
   b. Tell one story at a time.

3. Make your story easy to understand.
   a. Talk in complete sentences.
   b. Tell things in the order that they happened.

4. Make sure others will like your story.
   a. Make sure they like to hear you.
   b. Make sure they like to see you.

Although no instruction was given in the art of listening it was felt
that the periods for comment after each speaker and the few clear-cut goals
to listen for would help the children develop ever greater power of concen-
tration and sympathy so necessary for good listening.
Each of the exercises was planned with one or two of these units as the aim or aims of the lesson. Before any lessons were presented to the class there was a two week period in which the children were given fifteen minutes every morning to tell news. This period was conducted in the same manner in which the observation period was conducted. One child was in charge of the group for one week. At this time a record was kept of individual difficulties in the four areas that the exercises were intended to improve. The tabulation of the data is found in the Tables.

The exercises which were presented consisted of three formal learning periods and 5 practice periods each week. Each of the learning periods is described later on in this chapter. However, since all five practice periods were very similar and merely gave added experience and opportunity for all the members of the class these five periods are described as if they were one lesson. Actually they reviewed the previous day's learning and the aims set up for that week.

The practice periods were conducted in a manner very similar to the observation period and the recording period. One child was chosen to be in charge of the group for a week. This person called upon various ones to come before the group and give their news. The leader tried to keep order and help the speaker. After each child had spoken, the aims for that week were discussed and the class was asked if anyone had any suggestions that would help the speaker. Devices were used in order to bring some carry over from the lesson period to the practice period. The practice periods were about fifteen minutes in length and were held first thing in the morning.

In the hopes of measuring some effects from these exercises a record was kept for a two week period following the presentation of the exercises.
Here again tabulations were made of all the difficulties the children had in the four areas which had just been presented to them. This data of its results can be found in chapter 3.

The writer feels that the exercises are more effective in the order given although the plans are flexible and can be varied to suit the individual. Until the children have something to tell about and know what to say they cannot be expected to speak. It was felt that if they were helped in knowing what to say in the first unit they would profit more from the other units.
CHAPTER IV

EXERCISES USED TO IMPROVE ORAL EXPRESSION
CHAPTER IV

EXERCISES USED TO IMPROVE ORAL EXPRESSION

The exercises used in this study were divided into one week units. A plan of the study is included on the next page.

It was assumed that these children had had no training of this sort before. Many of the exercises included were merely to explain what was desired in a good news report. Other exercises gave them a chance to use this knowledge to criticize some stories that were presented to them. These stories were supplied to them because it was felt that their own stories should be saved for their practice periods.

The children were given many opportunities to practice what they had learned. These opportunities were motivated by the devices included in the study.
PLAN OF STUDY

I. FIRST WEEK
Monday - Telling a story from pictures.
Wednesday - Guessing stories with secret pictures.
Friday - Choosing stories to tell the class.
Practice Periods - Using question marks to note all the parts of the story.

II. SECOND WEEK
Monday - Finding pictures that are not part of the story.
Wednesday - Listening to run on stories.
Friday - Answering questions about a story.
Practice Periods - Earning targets by sticking to one story.

III. THIRD WEEK
Monday - Unscrambling pictures that tell a story.
Wednesday - Telling a story in order.
Friday - Sharing the telling of a story in order.
Practice Periods - Raising a field of flowers.

IV. FOURTH WEEK
Monday - Listing things that make us look well and sound well.
Wednesday - Using traffic lights to tell how we sound.
Friday - Giving a play with big and small voices.
Practice Periods - Earning rabbits' ears by looking well and sounding well.

V. FIFTH WEEK
Monday - Passing a story along to see how well we know it.
Wednesday - Selecting one story to tell from a day of activities.
Friday - Telling a story with scrambled pictures.
Practice Periods - Pinning up needles in our weakest area.

VI. SIXTH WEEK

Monday - Measuring our growth in looking well and sounding well.
Wednesday - Telling stories from secret pictures.
Friday - Trying to tell a story that we don't know.
Practice Periods - Moving our needles to the good story teller bulletin boards.
UNIT I

KNOW YOUR STORY

1. KNOW THE NAME OF YOUR STORY.

2. KNOW ALL THE PARTS OF YOUR STORY.
LESSON ONE  TELLING A STORY FROM PICTURES

Preparation

At the top of the bulletin board a sign was prepared saying:

Know Your Story

1. Know the name of your story.
2. Know all the parts of your story.

This bulletin board was used for pinning up devices.

Material

A chart of four pictures that tell a story was used. All the pictures in this study were taken from the Retts' Reading Readiness Book, Take Off, unless otherwise stated.

Procedure

Who will tell us what the sign on the bulletin board says? Yes, this week as we give our news and as we talk together we are going to try to remember these things:

1. Know what you are going to talk about.
2. Know all the parts of your story.

Here are some pictures that tell a story. Today we are going to make up a story about these pictures. Who can give us a good name for the story? (Write the name on the blackboard.) Now let's pretend that one of you took a trip like this one last weekend. It is newstime and you want to tell us about your trip. These are the things you want to talk about. What is the first thing you would say? (Write it on the blackboard with the number 1 by it.) That's the first part of the story. Now what will the second part of your story be like? (Point to picture number 2)
Continue in this manner until all the parts of the story are on the board. Ask several of the children to tell the story.

This story has four parts to it. Some stories have more parts and some stories have fewer parts. Before you can tell a story well, you must know what you are going to talk about and you must know all the parts to the story. Look at these pictures. Make up your own story to go with them. Then tell us the story. Know your story before you begin. Who will try it?

At the end of the lesson pin up the chart of pictures on the bulletin board.

Sample

A Trip to the Farm

1. We packed things into the car.
2. We passed a tractor on the way.
3. The man stopped our car because cows were crossing.
4. Grandfather and Grandmother were waiting.
LESSON TWO

GUSSING STORIES WITH SECRET PICTURES

Materials

A series of pictures that tell a story were used. They were taken from the Life Magazine. Several sheets of colored paper were folded in half, and pictures from a photography magazine were pasted inside.

Procedure

Today I am going to show you some pictures that tell a story. Each picture tells a different part of the story. Look at the pictures carefully. Now give the story a good name and make up a story about the pictures. Make sure you know all the parts of the story.

Ask several of the children to tell their stories. Write the parts of their stories on the board when they are through.

Here are some secret pictures. After I have explained what I want you to do with these pictures I will give each one to a small group. The group will make up a story about their picture. They will give their story a name and several parts. When everyone is finished the pictures will be collected and set on the chalk tray. One person from each group will come and tell their story. The class will try to guess which picture the story is about. See how interesting you can make your stories.

Divide the class into small groups and give each group a picture. Stress the idea of having several parts to the story. Then collect the pictures, display them, and listen to the stories.

Samples

The name of the story is the big dog house. The mother sold a dog to the little boy. One of the dogs sneaked away to a brook. There he is with
a big dog, and there he sees a cat. Then he came home and the boy measured him. Soon they went for a walk and then they went to bed.
LESSON THREE

CHOOSING STORIES TO TELL THE CLASS

Preparation

Before this lesson was taught the children were asked to be ready to tell a good story. Before the lesson began the class was divided into small groups.

Procedure

You were all asked to have a story ready to tell. Think about that story for a minute. What is the name of the story? What are the parts of the story? Each of you will tell your group the name of your story and all the parts of your story. However, you are not to tell the story. Then the group will decide who knows their story best. The group will hear the whole story and help the person with any part of the story that is not clear. Then we will hear the best story from each group. Remember to tell all the parts of the story.

Check with each group to make sure that they are telling just the parts of the story. When each group has chosen the best story have the whole group hear those stories.

Sample

The name of the story is Spooky House. We went to visit some friends. First we came into the entrance hall and we decided to explore the house. I went up some creaky stairs. Then I saw a drum. I went into another room where there were no lights and I ended up in the closet.
PRACTICE PERIODS USING QUESTION MARKS TO NOTE ALL PARTS TO THE STORY

Material

Question marks were made out of construction paper. A sample is included on the next page.

Procedure

After each child has told his news, the name of their story and all the parts of the story were written down on the question mark. The class was asked to tell the name and the various parts of the story. Then they were asked if the speaker knew all the parts to his story and if the speaker knew the name of his story. If the answers were yes then the question mark was pinned to the bulletin board. At the end of the week the question marks on the bulletin board went home.
The use of the question mark is explained on the preceding page.
UNIT II

TELLING ONE WHOLE STORY

1. STICK TO THE POINT.

2. TELL ONE STORY AT A TIME.
LESSON ONE

FINDING PICTURES THAT ARE NOT PART OF THE STORY

Preparation

At the top of the bulletin board a sign was placed saying:

Tell One Whole Story

1. Stick to the point.

2. Tell one story at a time.

This bulletin board was used to pin up devices.

Material

A series of eight pictures were used. Six of them told a story and the other two did not fit into the story. The pictures were placed into the pockets of a wall chart where they could easily be shifted from place to place.

Procedure

Who will read what it says on the bulletin board. Last week we talked about knowing our stories. Once we have decided what to talk about let's try to stick to that one story. It is only fair that we give everyone a chance to talk. If we tell more than one story then someone else will not get a turn.

Show the group the eight pictures with the six pictures in the correct order and the two extra pictures slipped in between.

Here is a story in pictures. Look at it carefully. See if you can make up a story to go with the pictures. Who is ready to tell us their story? (Have one child tell his story.) Is there anything wrong with the story? Has he told one whole story? (Ask them to come up and fix the story.) Who would like to tell the story now. (Have the story told again without the extra pictures.) Which story was better? Yes, the second one. It is
very important to stick to the point when we tell a story. Otherwise our story is very hard to understand. We do not want to make it hard for others to listen to our story. So when we tell a story, let's stick to the point. Let's tell what we set out to tell.
LESSON TWO

LISTENING TO RUN ON STORIES

Material

A series of three stories from Stories and Story Telling by Angela M. Keyes. The stories appear on the next page.

Procedure

I am going to read you a story. I want to see how many of you are wide awake today. Listen to the story very carefully. There is something wrong with it. See if you can tell us what it is. (Read the stories as given on the next page.) What was wrong with the story? Yes, there was more than one story. Listen again and tell me how many stories there were. Yes, there were three. Now I will read the stories separately. See if they are easier to understand.

After reading the stories again ask several of the children to tell one of the stories. Check to be sure that they do not tell more than one story at a time.
Three stories from *Stories and Story Telling*.

A dog was crossing a stream of water with a piece of meat in his mouth. As he looked down he thought he saw another dog with a larger piece of meat. Said the greedy fellow to himself, "I'll have that, too." He dropped his own meat and sprang into the water after the shadow. The real meat fell into the water and floated away.

Our puppy is so little he can hardly stand up. But he wants the kitten to think him a big dog. So the other day he steadied himself on his legs and tried to give a loud bark. "Bow wow," he said. And down he tumbled.

"Who are you?" said Tom to the small black shadow beside him.

"Why, I'm you," said the shadow. "Don't you know me?"

"What, a little fellow like you?" cried Tom; "You're very much mistaken." And away he strode.

"No, a big fellow like you," said the shadow, as he shot out in front of Tom.
LESSON THREE

ANSWERING QUESTIONS ABOUT A STORY

Material

A story called "The Quarrel" was used. A copy of the story is on the next page.

Procedure

Today, I am going to read you a story. Sometimes I will stop right in the middle of the story, and I will ask you a question. If the question is about the story you are to answer it right away. If the question is not about the story you are to shake your head no. Remember now, do not answer the question unless it is about the story.

Read the story as it is written on the next page. The questions have been inserted into the story.
The Quarrel

One morning Tom's right foot said to Tom's left foot, "Let me go first."
(Who wanted to go first?)
"No," said Tom's left foot, "You let me go first."
(Which foot do you start with in the morning?)
"No," said Tom's right foot, "You let me go first."
And they began all over again.
Suddenly Tom's left ear remarked to Tom's right ear, "Perhaps the silly things will set out together."
(Do ears talk?)
"The very thing to do," cried both feet, and they started off.
(Who started off first?)
This left Tom without a leg to stand on. So he fell down and bruised them both.
(Have you ever done that?)
They were black and blue for three whole days.
Material

Targets were made out of construction paper as shown on the next page.

Procedure

After each child has told his news the class was asked if the speaker had stuck to the point and had told just one story. If he had done both things successfully, his target was pinned up on the bulletin board. At the end of the week the targets on the bulletin board went home.
The use of the target is explained on the preceding page.
UNIT III

MAKE YOUR STORY EASY TO UNDERSTAND

1. TALK IN COMPLETE SENTENCES.

2. TELL THINGS IN THE ORDER THAT THEY HAPPENED.
LESSON ONE

UNSCRAMBLING PICTURES THAT TELL A STORY

Preparation

At the top of the bulletin board a sign was prepared saying: Make your story easy to understand.

1. Talk in complete sentences.
2. Tell things in the order that they happened.

This bulletin board was used for pinning up the flower garden which is explained later.

Material

A series of pictures that tell a story were used.

Procedure

Would someone like to read for us the words at the top of this bulletin board? Have you ever heard anyone who used "and so" or "and then" too much? They often tell their stories in one big long sentence. We have here a flower garden that needs to be weeded. The garden is full of "and's" and "so's" and "then's." Let's see if we can make the garden look better this week by weeding out all the words that we stick in between sentences. Also, let's see if we can put our sentences in the right order.

Now here is a story in pictures. Study it a minute and tell me if you see anything wrong. (Pause.) Yes, the pictures are not in the right order. Who would like to come up and rearrange the pictures?

When the pictures are in the right order ask someone to tell the story.

Now the story is easy to understand, isn't it. Listen to it again and see if it is still easy to understand. (Tell the story in one sentence using "and then's" between each sentence.) Now why is the story difficult to understand?
If we want to make our stories easy to understand, we must tell them in order and talk in complete sentences.
LESSON TWO

TELLING A STORY IN ORDER

Material

The story "The Travels of a Fox" from For the Story Teller was used.

Procedure

Today I am going to tell you the story of the traveling fox. Listen very carefully, and see if you can remember the order in which the story is told. Then one of you will be asked to tell the story. (After the story is told, review the order in which it was told.) Who did the fox put into his bag first? Who did he put into his bag second? (Continue in this manner until all the animals are mentioned as follows: the bee, the hen, the pig, the goat, the boy, and the dog.) Now who can retell the story and talk in complete sentences?
LESSON THREE

SHARING THE TELLING OF A STORY IN ORDER

Material

A series of four pictures that tell a story were used.

Procedure

Today I am going to give out some pictures. These pictures tell a story that you all know. It is the story of "The Three Bears." (Show them the pictures and make sure that they know just what parts of the story are in the pictures.) When it is time the boy or girl who has the picture of the first part of the story will stand and tell just that part of the story. Then the person who is holding the picture that tells about the second part of the story will stand and tell just that part of the story. When the third and fourth parts of the story have been told, the people holding the cards will give them to someone else and we will listen to the story again. Be sure you tell the story in the correct order. Be sure you talk in complete sentences.
Material

A brown field with slots in it was made out of construction paper. In the slots were hidden some flowers, covered with slips of paper that were called weeds. Some of the slips were marked "then", some were marked "and", and some were marked "so".

Procedure

When a child had told a story in order and had not used too many "and's", "so's", and "then's", he could "weed" the garden. This consisted of taking a firm hold of the slip of white paper and pulling it upwards. The flower then appeared and the "weed" fell out. By the end of the week the whole garden was in bloom. The ones who had done the weeding picked their flowers and took them home.
UNIT IV

MAKING SURE OTHERS WILL LIKE YOUR STORY

1. MAKE SURE THEY LIKE TO HEAR YOU.

2. MAKE SURE THEY LIKE TO SEE YOU.
LESSON ONE  LISTING THINGS THAT MAKE US LOOK WELL AND SOUND WELL

Preparation

At the top of the bulletin board a sign was prepared saying: Make sure others will like your story.
1. Make sure they like to hear you.
2. Make sure they like to see you.

The bulletin board was used for pinning up the devices.

Procedure

Would someone like to read to the class what it says at the top of the bulletin board? We have talked about knowing your story, telling one story at a time, and making your story easy to understand.

Today we are going to talk about the story teller. What do you sound like, and what do you look like while you are telling your story? Now let's list some things that we should try to remember when we are telling a story. First how should we sound? (List them on the blackboard as they say them.) How should we look?

Now I have here some rabbit ears. Each of you is to decide which one of these four aims you need to grow in. I will write it down on the ears. You may put your name on the ears too. When you tell a story we will see if you have grown with that one aim. If you have, you may pin your rabbit ears to the bulletin board.
LESSON TWO  USING TRAFFIC LIGHTS TO TELL HOW WE SOUND

Material

Three squares of paper were prepared for each child. One was colored red, one orange, and one green.

Procedure

This morning you all received red, green, and orange squares. We are going to listen to some people tell stories. If you cannot hear them too well, hold your green square on the desk before you. Hold them very still. This will tell your speaker that he must talk a little louder. If you can hear the speaker very well, hold the orange color in front of you. This will tell the speaker that you can hear him very well. If you think the speaker is talking too loud hold the red square in front of you. This will tell the speaker that he is talking too loudly. (Review these directions carefully with them, and then call up a child to speak before the group).
LESSON THREE

PROCEDURE

You all know the story of the "Three Bears." This morning some of you will take the parts of the "Three Bears" and will give a play for the rest of us. Someone with a loud voice is going to take the part of the little bear who has a very wee voice. Someone with a very light voice is going to take the part of the great big bear who has a great big voice. Two people with voices that are just right will take the parts of Mother Bear and Goldenhair. Let's see if those with large voices can speak softly and those with small voices can speak more loudly.
PRACTICE PERIODS       EARNING RABBIT EARS BY LOOKING WELL AND SOUNDING WELL

Material

Rabbits' ears were cut out of colored construction paper.

Procedure

At the beginning of the week the name of each child was written on a rabbit ear. Also the mannerism that they were going to work to improve was written on their rabbit ears. When each child had finished his story the class decided if he had improved in the mannerism he had set out to improve. Those who had shown growth pinned their rabbit ears on the bulletin board. At the end of the week the rabbit ears were collected.
The use of the rabbit ears is explained on the preceding page.
UNIT V

REVIEW
LESSON ONE  

PASSING A STORY ALONG TO SEE HOW WELL WE KNOW IT

Preparation

At the top of the bulletin board a sign was prepared saying: We are spinning yarns. The board was divided into four sections and a sign was pinned at the top of each section. The signs said:

1. Know your story.
2. Tell one whole story.
3. Make your story easy to understand.
4. Look well and sound well.

It was found helpful to pin the corresponding device with the sign. This bulletin board was used for pinning up devices as will be explained later.

Material

The story "How We First Came to Have Umbrellas" from the book For the Children's Hour was read.

Procedure

We have been talking about how to tell better stories for four weeks now. Could some one tell better stories? We have thought about one of these aims at a time. Now, we are going to have more than one aim when we are telling our stories. Today the aims will be to know our story and to tell it in order. One person will step out of the room. The rest of you will hear the story. Then one of you will go out of the room and retell the story to the child in the hall. In the meantime the rest of the class will write on the blackboard the parts of the story. When the children come back the one who was first sent out of the room will tell the story. The rest of you will see if he tells all the parts of the story and tells them in order.
LESSON TWO

SELECTING ONE STORY TO TELL FROM A DAY OF ACTIVITIES

Procedure

Today we will see how well we can tell one story at a time and look well and sound well, too. First of all, think of a happy day that you have had recently. Then one of you will tell us everything that happened on that day, and I will write it on the board. (Choose someone and list the things in outline form.) Now choose one thing that happened to you on that day. Tell us all about it. Remember to stick to one story. Do not tell us about anything else that happened on that day. Also remember to look well and sound well while you are telling the story.
LESSON THREE  
TELLING ONE STORY WITH SCRAMBLED PICTURES

Materials

A series of pictures that tell a story were used in this lesson.

Procedure

We are going to make our stories easy to understand today. Here are some pictures that tell a story. Can anyone tell me what the story is? That's right, Peter Rabbit. Now someone come up and tell us the story. Start a new sentence every time you go to the next picture. (Have one or two do this.) Now we are going to mix up the pictures. Let's see if someone can come up and tell us the story in the correct order. Remember to start a new sentence every time you get to a new picture.
PRACTICE PERIODS

PINNING UP NEEDLES IN OUR WEAKEST AREA

Material

Needles were made out of construction paper and yarn.

Procedure

As each child told his story the children decided which of the four aims he was weakest in. The speaker then hung up his needle in that section of the bulletin board. (The bulletin board is described in lesson one of this unit.) Any perfect needles went home.
The use of the weaving needle is explained on the preceding page.
LESSON ONE  MEASURING OUR GROWTH IN LOOKING WELL AND SOUNDING WELL

Preparation

The bulletin board was left the same as last week. A weaving mat was added and is explained later on.

Material

Pictures of a nursery rhyme and the rabbit ears were used.

Procedure

Today we are going to see how much we have grown in looking well and sounding well. Here is a rhyme that you know. Let's say it together.

(Pause.) When you are chosen to come up before the group you will be given the rabbit ears you had a few weeks ago. You are to tell us what it says on the rabbit ears. Then you are to say the nursery rhyme, and the class will decide if you have grown in the aim you have chosen. Those who have grown may take their rabbit ears home.
LESSON TWO

TELLING STORIES FROM SECRET PICTURES

Material

A series of pictures that tell a story were used and an extra picture was mixed in.

Procedure

(Call five children before the group. Give each of them one of the pictures.) Here are five secret pictures. They tell a story. One of you will begin the story, and each of you will add a bit to the story as you see it on your picture. The rest of you listen to see if you can tell what is wrong with the picture. (When they have discovered that one of the pictures does not belong to the story have them retell the story without the extra picture.) We know we must take out the extra picture because it does not stick to the point. (Now collect the pictures and give them to four different children in scrambled order.) Now tell the story again and see if there is anything wrong with it.
LESSON THREE

TRYING TO TELL A STORY THAT WE DON'T KNOW

Material

A series of pictures which tell a story were used. The story was difficult to perceive.

Procedure

Would four of you like to step before the group. Here are some pictures that tell a story. Listen while these people tell the story. See if you can decide what is wrong with it. (The children will have difficulty making the story understood.) Yes, they did not know their story. Now I want four of you to tell the story again and I will tell each of you what your part of the story is about before you tell it to the group.
PRACTICE PERIODS  MOVING OUR NEEDLES TO THE GOOD STORY TELLER MAT

Material

The bulletin board was the same as it was the preceding week. A mat was made out of construction paper by folding the paper in half and cutting from the folded end up to one inch of the edge. This was of a size that made it easy to push the needles through.

Procedure

As the children told their stories the class decided if the child had overcome his bad speaking habit as was designated by the position of his needle on the bulletin board. If he had he was able to take his needle off the bulletin board and weave it into the mat. This showed that he had joined the ranks of the good story tellers. At the end of the week the good story tellers took their needles home.
A sample series of pictures used in the exercises. This set is taken from the Betts' Reading Readiness Book, Take Off. The use of these pictures is explained in Unit III, Lesson 3.
CHAPTER V

ANALYSIS OF DATA
CHAPTER V
ANALYSIS OF DATA

It was the purpose of this study to prepare a series of exercises for improving second grade children in oral expression. The data were analyzed on the following basis:

1. Number of contributions each child made.
2. Knowing what to talk about.
3. Knowing the parts of the story.
4. Sticking to the point.
5. Telling one thing at a time.
6. Talking in complete sentences.
7. Maintaining an orderly sequence.
8. Sounding well.
9. Looking well.

The writer spent two weeks previous to using the exercises for purposes of checking the youngsters on the points listed above. At the conclusion of six weeks of teaching a two week period was again used to evaluate progress in the same skills.

Table I gives a picture of the group of 17 children before and after teaching in terms of the number of times each child contributed to the group discussion and also the number of minutes spent in talking.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILD</th>
<th>Number of Contributions</th>
<th>Total Number Minutes Child Spoke</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>Before</td>
<td>After</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Before</td>
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<td><strong>S.D.</strong></td>
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<td><strong>1.5</strong></td>
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The examination of Table I reveals that in some cases individuals made more contributions after teaching and some made fewer. Had all children responded an equal number of minutes the number would have been near 9. The tables indicate that many children speak often and long and others contribute little. There was little change in this distribution after teaching.

In cases 1 and 2 there seems to be evidence of a decided response to the lessons. In the cases of children 7 and 9 absences in the 2 weeks following the exercises made it impossible to get any information on their reaction. The dashes indicate this lack of information.
### TABLE II

PERCENTAGE IMPROVEMENT IN KNOWING WHAT YOU ARE GOING TO TALK ABOUT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILD</th>
<th>Contributions Before Teaching</th>
<th>Deficiencies*</th>
<th>Percent of Deficiencies</th>
<th>Contributions After Teaching</th>
<th>Deficiencies</th>
<th>Percent of Deficiencies</th>
<th>Difference in Percent of Deficiencies</th>
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</table>

* A deficiency is the failure to know what you are going to talk about during one contribution.
Table II shows the difficulties each child had in knowing what he was going to talk about. During each contribution it was decided whether or not the child knew what he was going to talk about. Out of a total of 48 contributions made before the exercises were given, there were 5 contributions that did not meet the standard given. This gives a mean figure of .1 deficiency per contribution. Of the 41 contributions made after the exercises were given 2 of them did not meet the standard given, or the mean deficiency was +.05. The percent of deficiency shows what portion of their total contributions were deficient. A comparison of each child's percentage before and after the exercises shows the percent of improvement of each child. If the child did not speak at all there was no way of measuring his ability to satisfy the requirement which was measured. Dashes indicate this lack of information.

It is shown that there is a mean improvement of 7.8 percent in the performance of the children after the exercises were given. The standard deviation of 8.8 indicates a narrower spread than is true of most of the items tested.
### TABLE III
PERCENTAGE IMPROVEMENT IN KNOWING THE PARTS OF YOUR STORY

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILD</th>
<th>Contributions Before Teaching</th>
<th>Deficiencies*</th>
<th>Percent of Deficiencies</th>
<th>Contributions After Teaching</th>
<th>Deficiencies</th>
<th>Percent of Deficiencies</th>
<th>Difference in Percent of Deficiencies</th>
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<td>46.9</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

* A deficiency is the failure to know the parts of the story during one contribution.
Table III shows that before the exercises were given 12 of the 50 contributions were deficient in knowing all the parts of the story. A mean of 24 of the contributions were deficient.

After the exercises were given 3 out of the 41 contributions were deficient. This shows a mean improvement of 19.3 percent for the children who performed. The standard deviation of 46.9 indicates a wide spread. It can be seen that the performance of children 10 and 11 after the exercises is inferior to their previous performance.

Those who did not perform or who were absent were not considered since there is no way of knowing what they could have done. Dashes indicate this lack of information.
TABLE IV

PERCENTAGE IMPROVEMENT IN STICKING TO THE POINT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CHILD</th>
<th>Contributions Before Teaching</th>
<th>Deficiencies*</th>
<th>Percent of Deficiencies</th>
<th>Contributions After Teaching</th>
<th>Deficiencies</th>
<th>Percent of Deficiencies</th>
<th>Difference in Percent of Deficiencies</th>
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* A deficiency is the failure to stick to the point during one contribution.
It can be seen from Table IV that most of the children gave improved performances in sticking to the point after the tests were given. Of the 50 contributions given before the exercises 17 were deficient while out of the 41 contributions after the exercises only 6 were deficient.

The dashes show where a lack of performance made it impossible to collect data. The mean percentage of deficiency of those who contributed before the exercises was 31. The mean percentage of deficiency of those who contributed after the exercises was 13. The individual improvement of those who spoke had a mean of 29.1 percent. The scatter of this data as measured by the standard deviation was 32.3.
**TABLE V**

PERCENTAGE IMPROVEMENT IN TELLING ONE STORY AT A TIME

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<th>CHILD</th>
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* A deficiency is the failure to tell one story during one contribution.
In Table V there is a mean improvement of 19.7 percent in telling one story at a time after the exercises were given. A standard deviation of 23.9 indicates considerable scatter. Of the 50 contributions made before the exercises, 48 or almost half of them were deficient. After the exercises 15 of the 41 contributions were failures.

This means that 52 percent of the contributions given before the exercises were deficient, and 37 percent of the contributions given after the exercises were deficient. The dashes indicate a lack of information due to the fact that those children did not make any contributions.
### TABLE VI

**PERCENTAGE IMPROVEMENT IN TALKING IN COMPLETE SENTENCES**

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* A deficiency is the failure to talk in complete sentences during one contribution.
From Table VI it can be seen that there was no improvement in talking in complete sentences after the exercises. In 50 contributions before the exercises were given 23 of them were not told in complete sentences, or a mean of 44 percent. Of the contributions given after the exercises 27 of them failed or a mean of 74 percent of the contributions failed. The negative differences indicate a decrease in the quality of performance after the exercises. Six of the children gave poorer performances after the exercises had been given. The standard deviation of 35.2 indicates that the spread was considerable. The dashes indicate that lack of performance of some children gives no method of measuring the results of the exercises on those children.
### TABLE VII
PERCENTAGE IMPROVEMENT IN TELLING THINGS IN THE ORDER THAT THEY HAPPENED

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* A deficiency is the failure to tell things in order during one contribution.
Table VII indicates that the improvement of telling things in the order that they happened was a mean of 16.1 percent. The scatter was a standard deviation of 32.1. There were 5 deficiencies in the 50 performances given before the exercises, and 1 deficiency in 41 performances after the exercises. This gives a mean deficiency of 12 percent before the exercises and 2.0 percent after the exercises.

The computations were made on only those children who spoke and the dashes indicate a lack of information due to no performance.
TABLE VIII
PERCENTAGE IMPROVEMENT IN SOUNDING WELL

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<td>1.5</td>
<td>0.7</td>
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* A deficiency is the failure to sound well during one contribution.
A look at Table VIII reveals that one child improved in sounding well after the exercises were given, and the dashes indicate a lack of information about the other performances. Although before the exercises 7 of the 50 contributions did not sound well and after the exercises 4 of 41 contributions did not sound well. The absence of children 7 and 9 very much effects the mean percentage of improvement of 1.9.
## Table IX

### Percentage Improvement in Looking Well

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Child</th>
<th>Contributions Before Teaching</th>
<th>Deficiencies*</th>
<th>Percent of Deficiencies</th>
<th>Contributions After Teaching</th>
<th>Deficiencies</th>
<th>Percent of Deficiencies</th>
<th>Difference in Percent of Deficiencies</th>
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</tr>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
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<td>11</td>
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<td><strong>Mean</strong></td>
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<td>.38</td>
<td>45</td>
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<td>.27</td>
<td>26.</td>
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<td>1.5</td>
<td>1.3</td>
<td>18.2</td>
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</table>

* A deficiency is the failure to look well during one contribution.
Out of the 9 children who performed both before and after the tests 6 of them gave improved performances after the exercises were given. The deficiencies of 50 contributions before the exercises were 19 or a mean of .38. The deficiencies of 41 contributions after the exercises were 11 or a mean of .27. This means that before the test the mean deficiency was 45 percent and after the test the mean deficiency was 26 percent.
CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS
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SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this study was to build a set of exercises to improve oral expression. The data was analysed as follows:

1. Number of contributions from each child before and after the exercises.
2. Percentage of improvement in knowing what you are going to talk about.
3. Percentage of improvement in knowing the parts of the story.
4. Percentage of improvement in sticking to the point.
5. Percentage of improvement in telling one story at a time.
6. Percentage of improvement in talking in complete sentences.
7. Percentage of improvement in telling things in order.
8. Percentage of improvement in sounding well.
9. Percentage of improvement in looking well.

CONCLUSIONS

I. Number of Contributions

An analysis of the data taken before and after the exercises shows that there was very little change in the number of contributions after the exercises. The means of 2.94 and 2.41 show very little change in the number of contributions and the standard deviations of 2.5 and 1.5 show very little change in spread.

II. Knowing Your Story

A. A comparison of the contributions before and after the exercises shows a mean improvement of 7.3 percent in knowing what you are going to talk about. A standard deviation of 8.8 shows that there is not much spread.
in the results.

B. A comparison of the contributions made before and after the exercises shows a mean improvement of 19.3 percent in knowing the parts of your story. A standard deviation of 46.9 shows a large spread in the results.

III. Telling One Story
A. An analysis of the contributions made before and after the exercises were given shows that there was a mean improvement of 29.1 percent in sticking to the point. A rather large spread is shown by the standard deviation of 32.3.

B. An analysis of the data reveals that after the exercises there was a mean improvement of 19.7 percent in telling one story at a time. The spread as measured by a standard deviation of 23.9 is not quite as large as the one for sticking to the point.

IV. Making Your Story Easy to Understand
A. An analysis of the data shows that there was no improvement in talking in complete sentences. This is shown by a mean difference of -23.7 percent. The standard deviation of 35.2 shows that the results varied quite a bit.

B. A comparison of the tests for telling things in the order that they happened shows a mean difference of 16.1 percent. A standard deviation of 32.1 shows that the data is widely scattered.

V. Making Others Like to Hear You
A. An analysis of the data shows a mean improvement of 1.9 percent in sounding well. The standard deviation of 19.9 shows some spread in the data.

B. An analysis of the data shows a mean improvement of 10.9 percent in
looking well. The standard deviation of 36.9 shows considerable spread in the data.

SUMMARY

The writer feels that the testing techniques used for this study were very crude and subjective. The data at best can only indicate a possible trend of improvement for individual children. Because such a small group of children participated in this test, the data cannot in any way be considered indicative of results which might be obtained in a larger population. The absence of several of the children during the final testing period caused by a measles epidemic radically effected the testing procedure of the concluding weeks.

The areas in which the children showed signs of improvement were as follows:

1. Knowing what you are going to talk about.
2. Knowing all the parts of your story.
3. Sticking to the point.
4. Telling one story at a time.
5. Telling things in the order in which they appeared.

The areas in which the children showed no sign of improvement and in some cases decreased in the ability to perform well were as follows:

1. Talking in complete sentences.
2. Sounding well.
CHAPTER VII
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH
CHAPTER VII
SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

1. Construct additional exercises to cover a longer period of time.
2. Construct exercises at other grade levels building upon the skills developed in these exercises.
3. Develop more objective testing techniques.
   A specific suggestion would be to record all results on a tape recorder. Then, using unbiased judges, give them the data in mixed order so that they do not know what came before or after the tests. In this way any positive results could be considered a true contribution of the exercises and a correlation between the opinions of the two judges could be a measure of the reliability of their judgement.
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