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BOSTON UNIVERSITY

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Service Paper

AN EVALUATION OF THE EFFECTS OF SPECIFIC REMEDIAL TEACHING ON A GROUP OF SEVENTH GRADE SLOW LEARNERS

Submitted by

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In partial fulfillment of requirements for

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The main goal of education in a democracy is to help each child to work to the limit of his capacity and to secure the training which will equip him for everyday living. Obviously, there are children who are not working to the limit of their capacity and who, under skillful guidance in an individual situation, can improve their standards. The current term for these pupils is "slow learners".

Slow learners are capable of being effectively educated, and ways should be found to fit the school facilities to their needs as well as to the needs of the more rapid learners.

Betts[1/] says that individual instruction permits a better understanding of all problems of the learner.

Betts[2/] also says that gains can be anticipated only if learning conditions are met.

As much of the work at the junior high level is in the content subjects, there is a need for proficiency in reading skills. With this need in mind, this study was undertaken.

1/ Emmett A. Betts, The Prevention and Correction of Reading Difficulties. Evanston, Illinois: Row, Peterson and Company, 1936, p. 282.

2/ Ibid., p. 283.

> If a pupil reads slowly and comprehends poorly, he is under a serious handicap in his study of history, geography, science and other subjects which involve reading to any degree. For a poor reader who is doing poor work in history or geography, for instance, the cure may be not to devote more time and effort to his history or geography, but to work for improvement in his reading with the expectation that improvement in other subjects will follow as a natural consequence. 1/

McCallister states that remedial and corrective measures must be selected with a thorough understanding of the character of reading deficiencies and of the causes which underlie them. Individual instruction is most effective, as the teacher is in close personal contact with the pupils. Analysis of progress records indicates that retarded readers in the upper grades and high school make satisfactory improvement during periods of training and that improvement persists after the training has been discontinued. 2/

1/ Edgar M. Fink, "Relation of Ability in Reading to Success in Other Subjects", Elementary School Journal, Vol. XXXVI, December, 1935, pp. 260-267.

2/ James M. McCallister, Remedial and Corrective Instruction in Reading. New York: D.Appleton-Century Company, 1936, p. 105.

Some principles given by Fitzerald for remedial work include the following:

1. Diagnosis should be followed by remedial work.
2. Remedial work should be fitted to the needs and applied to the defects of each child.
3. The prevention of defects is even more important in the long run than remedial work.
4. Motivation must pervade all work. 1/

Durrell says that the child should meet with success from the first day. 2/

STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

It is the purpose of this study to evaluate the efficiency of specific remedial teaching on a group of seventh grade slow learners by comparing the scores of tests on reading skills, language and spelling when no emphasis has been placed on weak spots with the scores of tests given after remedial instruction has taken place. These scores will also be compared with those of pupils who have been receiving regular class instruction over the same period of time.

1/ James A. Fitzerald, "Diagnostic and Remedial Progress in Reading," Educational Methods, Vol. XVII, February, 1938, pp. 221-225.

2/ Donald D. Durrell, "Providing for Individual Differences in Reading," Education, Vol. LVI, September, 1935, pp. 30-36.

RELATED RESEARCH

Traxler reports that an experiment was carried on in seventh grade classes in the University of Chicago High School where a remedial teacher was advised by the school psychologist and taught a group of five girls and three boys. The ages ranged from 12 to 13½ . All pupils fell within the normal range of 90-110 in I.Q. according to the Otis Self-Administering Higher Examination, Form A. These pupils were given the Sangren-Woody Silent Reading Test, the Traxler Silent Reading Test, Form 2, and the Gray Standardized Oral Reading Paragraphs and were found to be below the norm in reading achievement. The class met two periods each week for nine weeks under the supervision of the school psychologist and a practice teacher. Lessons included reading and discussing a selection from a book. Sometimes detailed questions were asked on paragraphs. On other occasions, the pupils were timed while reading a selection and were asked general questions involving their understanding of the organization and the main ideas. Tests used in measuring progress were: the Munroe Standardized Silent Reading, Test III; Iowa Silent Reading; Sangren-Woody Silent Reading, and the Traxler Test. The group as a whole gained on all the tests. Although there was improvement in all the mean scores, some individuals failed to gain on some tests. Of 72 opportunities

to improve, they gained on 57.7, and the pupils derived considerable lasting benefit from the instruction.[1/]

Dreis tutored one child at the Minneapolis, Minnesota, Child Guidance Clinic for 3 short periods each week for about 16 weeks. The child was 13 years and 9 months old chronologically, and of first grade ability when he was referred to the clinic for diagnosis and remedial teaching. He had marked disabilities in reading and in spelling. A combination of various methods suggested for use in remedial instruction were used. At the end of the period, the pupil had attained a level of efficiency equal to the third and fourth grades. Results justified the conclusion that a combination of methods in remedial instruction in reading produces marked improvement in the reading subjects.[2/]

A study was carried on in Tom's River, New Jersey, where pairs of pupils who were as nearly alike as possible in age, mental age, and scholastic achievement were selected. Form X of the New Stanford Achievement Test was given. Each experimental pupil was excused daily to spend a half-hour with one of the special teachers who worked with him on his reading and vocabulary only. Conditions were identical for

1/ Arthur E. Traxler, "An Experiment in Teaching Corrective Reading," Journal of Educational Research, Vol. XIII:258-63, February, 1934.

2/ Thelma A. Dreis, "A Case in Remedial Reading," Elementary School Journal, Vol.XXI, December, 1930, pp. 292-300.

both pupils in any pair with the exception of the special reading instruction. The teachers tried first of all to gain the confidence of the pupil, to ascertain his interests, to find out where his weakness lay, and to start just as far down in the scale of reading skills as his difficulties required. After 87 reading lessons, the groups were tested with Form Z of the Stanford Achievement Test. The average gain of the experimental pupils on the whole test, (11.9) was 1.86 times that of the control group.[1/]

The Bronxville, New York Junior High School offered remedial instruction to children coming into its seventh grade whose reading score on standardized tests indicated a reading deficiency or a reading difficulty. The group met for one regular class period a day, five days a week. Work consisted of reading for all types of purposes. Tests were frequent, so that a student might see his progress. The report of the remedial work concluded that proper remedial instruction during the seventh grade will enable poor readers to attain or very nearly attain grade placement in reading as gains were measured over a period of years.[2/]

In San Francisco, California, the Iowa Silent Reading

1/ Edgar M. Fink, "The Relation of Ability in Reading to Success in Other Subjects", Elementary School Journal, Vol. XXXVI, December, 1935, pp. 260-267.

2/ Howard V. Funk, "Remedial Reading Experiment", Educational Record, Volume XIX, sup., January, 1938, pp. 166-172.

Test was administered to all incoming low seventh grade pupils whose elementary reading scores showed them to be below 12 years 8 months in reading ability. Pupils were grouped in classes limited to 20. The groups met daily for one hour. Two objectives were stressed: the development of a pupil's desire and will to read and the planning of the work to meet the pupil's needs. Thought questions on the reading material were used, practice in spelling given, and emphasis placed upon vocabulary building. After a period of time, the Iowa Test was given again. Results showed that all pupils had gained in reading ability and that distasteful attitudes toward reading had been overcome.[1/]

In Chicago, Illinois, three clinics were set up in three elementary schools. The work was with children in grades four to eight who were low in reading ability. The average I.Q. was 89 shown by the Kuhlman-Anderson Test. The New Stanford General Ability and Gates 4-Type Tests indicated specific defects. Each difficulty was recorded. Fifty children were taught in groups of ten, forty minutes a day. After three months of instruction, the Gates 4-Type Tests were given and a gain of 6.6 months was noted. The children considered it an honor to be in the remedial class.[2/]

1/ Melanie C. Ainsworth, "A Remedial Reading Class in San Francisco," California Journal of Secondary Education, Vol.XII, November, 1937, pp. 417-420.

2/ James A. Fitzerald, "A Diagnostic and Remedial Program in Reading," Educational Methods, Vol.XXIII, February, 1938, pp. 221-225.

Two hundred thirty-five children who had reading defects which varied from mild retardation to extreme disabilities were studied in an average American school population in the vicinity of Chicago. These were compared with a control group of fifty and a thorough analysis of each child's disability was made. A list of factors which seemed to have impeded the child's progress was made with a view to overcoming the impediments which had prevented the child from learning to read. The motivation was the child's recognition of his own success. Progress was noted in this study under individual instruction and also in small groups of children selected for similarity of achievements and errors.[1/]

1/ Marion Monroe, Children Who Cannot Read. Chicago, Illinois: University of Chicago Press, 1932.

Description of Remedial Department

At various times during the school year pupils in the Junior High School of Darien, Connecticut, are given remedial instruction upon recommendation of the principal, the school psychologist, and teachers. These pupils are of all ages and degrees of mental retardation. The remedial teacher gives assistance in any phase of school work in which the pupils are below average. Children are present whose achievement ranges from the primary level to a more advanced educational level. It can be seen that the curriculum must of necessity be highly individualized. As a consequence, the number of pupils reporting at each class period is kept at a low figure. The pupils come to a special room set aside for the purpose during study periods or at class periods, if the occasion demands. The time of remedial instruction varies from 15 minutes to the full 45-minute period depending upon the nature of the work to be discussed. Frequently, pupils come of their own accord.

Summary of Method of Procedure

By using the previous year's records and reports of the school psychologist, twenty-six seventh grade pupils in the Darien, Connecticut, Junior High School were selected for this study. These pupils had I. Q.'s ranging from 84 to 105 which were the lowest in the grade. These pupils could be classed as "dull-normal" according to a term used by Ingram,[1] as they were unable to make normal school progress. She points out, also, that it is not easy to define either the mentally retarded or the dull-normal by means of a definite point in mental age or intelligence quotient because there are other factors in learning in addition to intelligence. These factors include home environment, school attendance, temperament, and conditions of health.[2]

The ratio of the group to the entire seventh grade enrollment was one to six. These pupils were given the Stanford Achievement Test - Partial Battery - Advanced, Form D, (with the exception of the Arithmetic tests), on November 4th, and the results were noted. The pupils were divided at random into an experimental group which was given remedial instruction on weaknesses noted, and a control group which was put into regular classes.

1/ Christine P. Ingram, Education of the Slow-Learning Child. New York: World Book Company, 1935, p. 3.

2/ Ibid., pp. 7-8.

The remedial work was planned following a study of the tests and suggestions from teachers, parents, and pupils. It varied according to the needs and ability of each pupil.

During the entire period of remedial instruction, the pupils were aware of their individual needs and a majority earnestly tried to cooperate and put a maximum amount of effort into the work. Two pupils lost interest and lacked sufficient drive to continue the work satisfactorily.

The lesson periods for the remedial group were for forty minutes, three times a week. Thus each pupil was given a total of twenty hours of remedial instruction during the entire period of ten weeks.

After a period of ten weeks had elapsed, Form E of the Stanford Achievement Test - Advanced Partial Battery, (with the exception of the Arithmetic tests), was given to measure the effectiveness of the program. Results were compared as shown in the following chapters.

REMEDIAL METHODS USED

SPELLING.

All of the members of the experimental group needed extensive training in methods of studying spelling. The regular weekly lists given by the English teachers were used in addition to words chosen from prepared lists in the English text,[1] the Buckingham-Ayers Spelling Scale,[2] and words chosen by the remedial teacher. Words misspelled in compositions were given particular attention.

The procedure used was as follows:

1. Look at the word.
2. Say the word.
3. Write the word while saying it.
4. Close eyes and try to "see" the word.
5. Write the word again.
6. Use the word in a sentence.

The kinaesthetic method was used when the pupil had extreme difficulty.

Drill was given to utilize words by thinking of synonyms, antonyms and using these in sentences. This device was helpful as a means of enlarging the pupils' vocabularies.

1/ J.C. Tressler and M.B. Shelmadine, Junior English in Action. Boston: D.C. Heath and Company, 1941.

2/ Buckingham-Ayers Spelling Scale, published by the Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Illinois, price 12 cents.

ENGLISH

Oral -- At all times effort was placed upon eliminating errors in oral English. Common errors corrected were as follows:

1. ain't
2. confusion of teach, learn
3. double negative
4. confusion of can, may
5. use of seen for saw
6. use of done for did
7. "that there", "that here"
8. "my mother, she"

Blair says that the chief cause of deficiency in oral and written expression is probably lack of experience and practice in using correct forms. A major function of the instruction in remedial English is to provide opportunity for pupils to use "new" and correct forms.[1/]

1/ Glenn Myers Blair, Diagnostic and Remedial Teaching in Secondary Schools. New York: Macmillan Company, 1947, p. 355.

ENGLISH

Written -- The most frequent errors noted and corrected were:

1. Capitals omitted at beginning of sentences and in titles
2. Periods omitted at end of sentences
3. Commas omitted between words in a series
4. Improper use of to, too, two
5. Improper use of their, there
6. Improper use of quotation marks

These errors were found in compositions and Social Studies papers which were brought to the remedial teacher for analysis and correction.

READING

Oral-- Each child worked in the book best fitted to his immediate needs. The Practice Readers[1/] were used extensively as the pupils enjoyed the short and interesting selections. These were available in Books I, II, III, and IV which gave a reading range of Grade IV to Grade VII. A set of questions for each selection gave opportunity to check comprehension and recall both orally and silently. Several boys who were reading at third and fourth grade levels were

1/ Clarence R. Stone and Charles C. Grover, Practice Readers. New York: Webster Publishing Company, 1942.

impressed by books about airplanes.[1/]

Although oral reading was undertaken during this study and errors were noted and discussed, more emphasis was placed on silent reading. At the junior high school level, it becomes increasingly difficult to master the content subjects if the reading skills have not been developed properly. A detailed study of the reading records of each individual pupil showed that the group as a whole needed :

1. Practice in rapid reading of easy material under timed conditions with comprehension checked either by written questions or discussion, or both
2. Careful reading of descriptive material with emphasis on understanding and obtaining the main thought
3. Interest in meaning of words and enlarging vocabulary
4. Stimulation of reading interest
5. Skimming to find certain words or thoughts

The Practice Readers mentioned on the previous page were used to measure recall and comprehension. Prose and Poetry,[2/] the seventh grade literature book, was also an

1/ Miriam B. Huber, Frank S. Salisbury, Arthur I. Gates, and Gertrude Whipple, Planes for Bob and Andy, New York:Macmillan, 1943, and Airplanes at Work. New York:Macmillan Company,1944.

2/ Margaret R. Greer,Mary M. Van Arsdale, D.Emma Wilker, Prose and Poetry. Syracuse, New York: L.W. Singer Company, 1939.

excellent source of material for these skills. Skimming practice and reading for detail were accomplished by using the Social Studies text.[1/]

1/ Ruth West and Willis M. West, The New World's Foundations in the Old. New York: Allyn and Bacon Company, 1946.

CHAPTER II

SOURCE AND NATURE OF DATA

The town of Darien, Connecticut, is purely residential with more than half of the families supported by business in New York. The children, for the most part, come from families with substantial incomes and enjoy many advantages. Many of the children leave school at the end of the eighth, ninth, or tenth grade to attend private preparatory schools. Very few, perhaps two or three, leave the junior high school each year at the age of sixteen.

The total junior high school enrollment of Darien is 406. Of this number, 157 are seventh grade pupils. Twenty-six seventh grade pupils whose records showed that they were below average in reading skills and spelling were selected for this study. Their I. Q.'s were obtained from the Stanford-Binet Test given by the school psychologist. Mental Ages were also taken from these reports.

Administration of tests.-- On November 4, 1948, the Stanford Achievement Test, Advanced Battery - Partial Form D - (with the exception of the Arithmetic tests), was administered to the group of 26 selected children. From this

group, thirteen pupils were selected at random for the experimental group, and thirteen for the control group. The control group continued to attend regular classes, and the experimental group was given regular remedial instruction.

CHAPTER III

ANALYSIS OF DATA

Results of the first testing showed that there was a wide spread in ability for the group. The total scores ranged from grades 4.9 to 8.1.

TABLE I

RANGE OF GRADES - FIRST TESTING

Grade	Frequency
4.9	1
5.2	1
5.4	2
5.6	4
5.7	1
5.8	1
6.0	2
6.3	3
6.6	3
6.7	1
6.8	1
7.7	1
7.9	1
8.0	1
8.1	2

The median grade level attained in the first testing was 6.3. Of this group 80.7% tested below seventh grade level indicating that remedial work was needed; 69.2% of the pupils were below seventh grade level in reading, 84.4% were below in spelling, 61.5% were below in language and 46.1% were below in vocabulary. It seemed advisable to emphasize spelling and reading throughout the entire program, as 92.3% of the experimental group were below the seventh grade level in spelling and 76.9% were below in reading.

Table II shows the comparison of the Mental Ages, Chronological Ages and the Intelligence Quotients of the boys and girls in the experiment.

TABLE II

COMPARISON OF M.A.'S,C.A.'S AND I.Q.'S OF BOYS AND GIRLS

	No.	MEAN M.A.	MEAN C.A.	MEAN I.Q.
BOYS	15	13.4	13.9	96.9
GIRLS	11	12.7	13.4	94.4
TOTAL	26	13.0	13.6	95.6

The mean M.A. of the 15 boys in the entire group was 13.4, the mean C.A. was 13.9, and the mean I.Q. was 96.9 .

The mean M.A. of the 11 girls in the entire group was 12.7 , the mean C.A. was 13.4, and the mean I.Q. was 94.4 .

The total mean M.A. of the entire group was 13.0, the total mean C.A. was 13.6, and the total mean I.Q. was 95.6 .

Table III shows the Chronological Age distribution.

TABLE III

CHRONOLOGICAL AGE DISTRIBUTION

Years	No. of Children
16 - 0 to 15 - 7	1
15 - 6 to 14 - 1	9
14 - 0 to 13 - 7	5
13 -6 to 13 - 1	4
13 - 0 to 12 - 7	1
12 - 6 to 12 - 1	6

The mean Chronological Age was 13.6 years at the time of the first testing.

Table IV shows the Mental Age distribution at the time of the first testing.

TABLE IV

MENTAL AGE DISTRIBUTION

Years	No. of Children
15 - 8 to 15 - 2	2
15 - 1 to 14 - 8	1
14 - 7 to 14 - 1	3
14 - 0 to 13 - 6	3
13 - 5 to 12 - 11	6
12 - 10 to 12 - 4	6
12 - 3 to 11 - 9	5

The mean Mental Age was 13-0 years at the time of the first testing.

Table V shows the frequency distribution of Intelligence Quotients at the time of the first testing.

TABLE V

I.Q. DISTRIBUTION

I.Q.	Frequency
105	1
104	1
103	2
102	2
101	1
100	1
98	1
96	6
94	1
93	2
92	
91	1
90	1
89	1
88	
86	2
84	1
82	
81	
80	1

Mean I.Q. at the time of the first testing was 95.6 .

Table VI shows the number of boys and girls in each group.

TABLE VI

BOYS AND GIRLS IN EACH GROUP

GROUP	BOYS	GIRLS	TOTAL
TEACH	5	8	13
NON-T	8	5	13

Comparison of the results of the first and second tests of the experimental group showed that a gain of three months had been made in both reading and spelling. This was satisfactory as much emphasis had been placed on these two subjects. A gain of two months was made in vocabulary work, and a gain of one month was made in language.

In the control group, where no remedial instruction had been given, it was found that one month's gain had been made in reading, vocabulary, and language. No gain had been made in spelling.

Table VII shows the comparison of the results of the second test.

TABLE VII

COMPARISON OF RESULTS OF SECOND TEST

Method	No.	Mean	S D	SE m	Diff.	SE Diff.	C.R.
Teach	13	54.16	5.71	1.65	1.61	.728	2.211
Non-T	13	55.77	6.60	1.91			

FIGURE I

Comparison of Grade Equivalents for 1st and 2nd Tests

Experimental Group

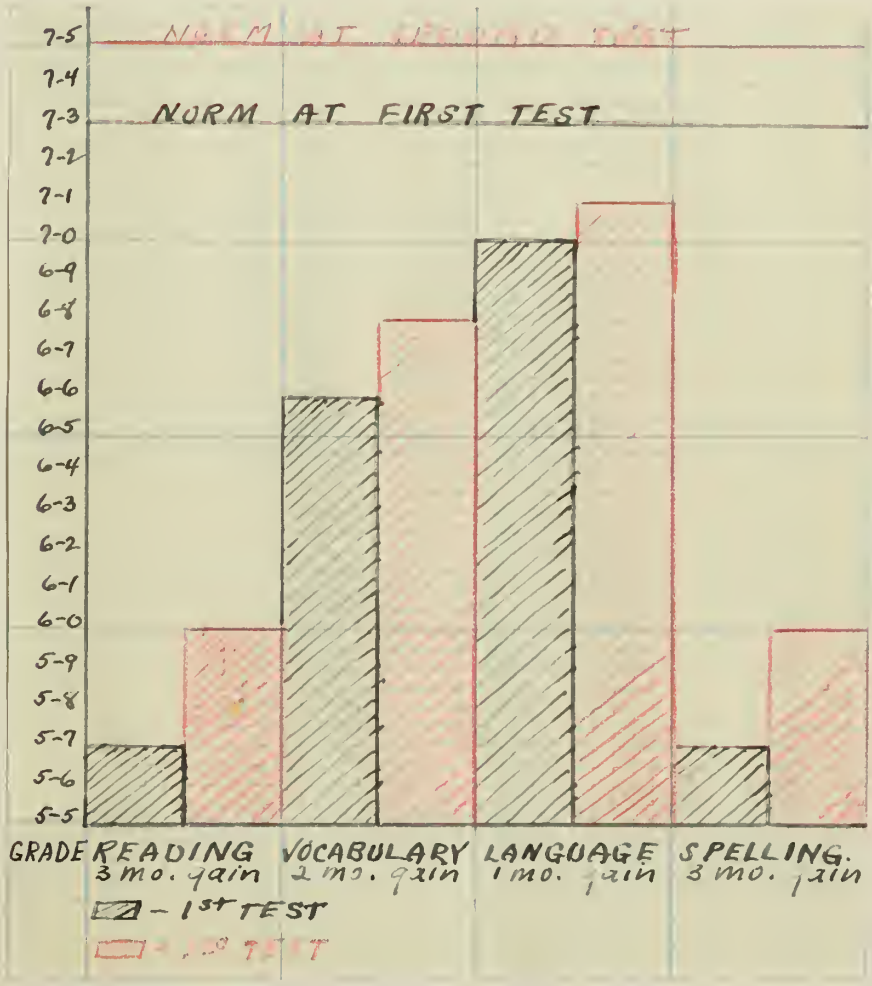


FIGURE II

Comparison of Grade Equivalents for 1st and 2nd Tests

Control Group

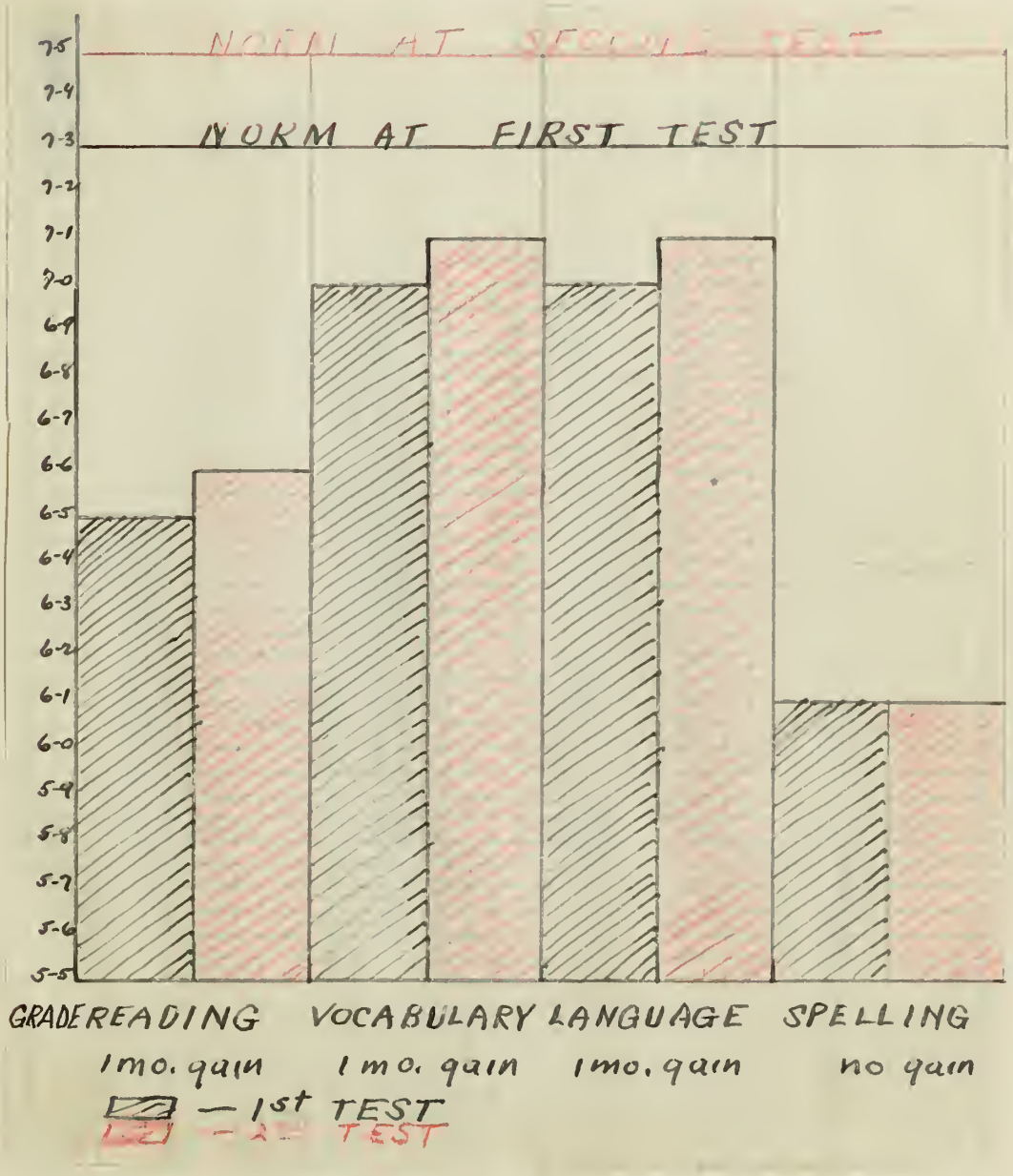


FIGURE III

Comparison of Age Equivalents for 1st and 2nd Tests

Experimental Group

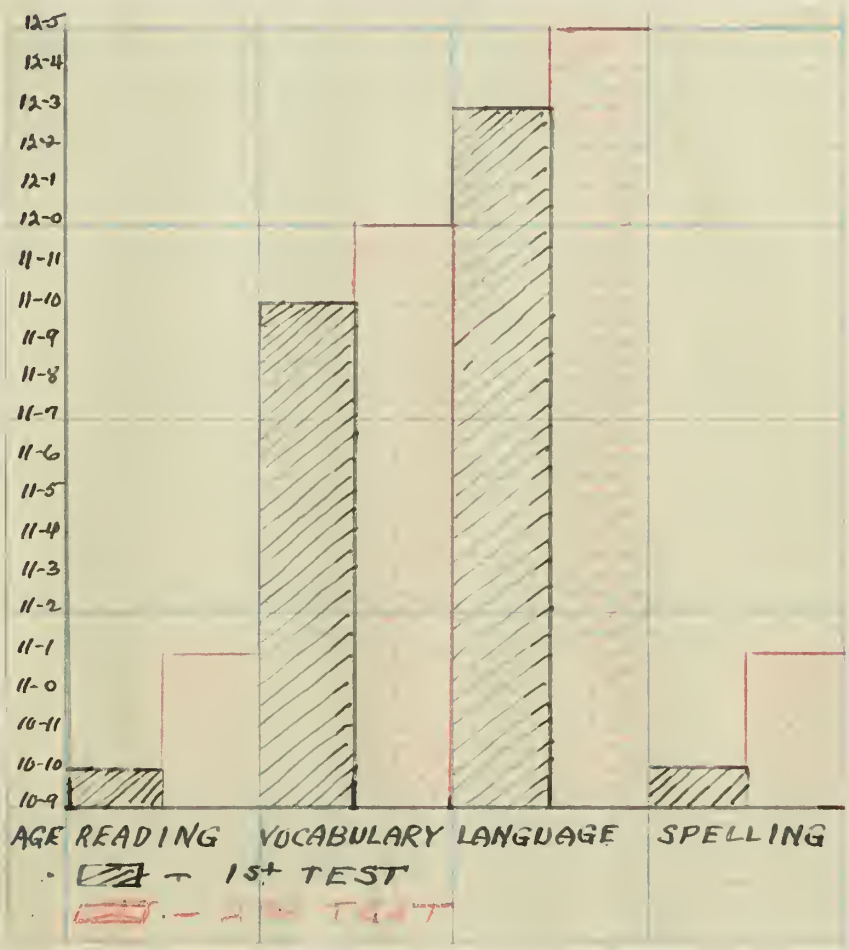
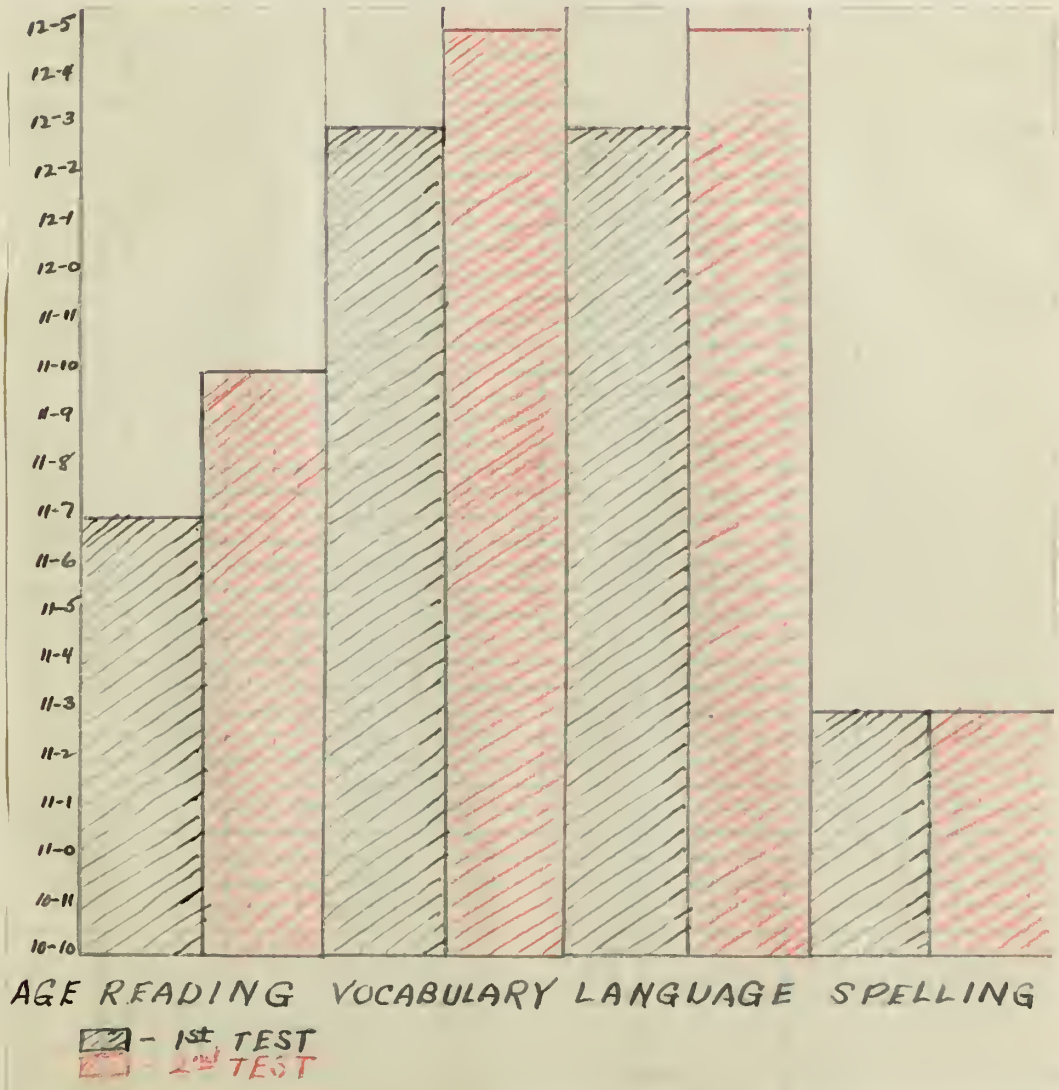


FIGURE IV

Comparison of Age Equivalents for 1st and 2nd Tests

Control Group



Summary:

1. The experimental group raised its average from a 6.2 grade level to 6.5 -- a gain of 3 months. The largest individual gain was 9 months.
2. Although the control group tested higher in both tests, the mean gain was not so large. It was one month.
3. The greatest gains were noticed in spelling. This fact is significant as much stress was put upon this subject in connection with reading lessons, composition, and regular spelling lessons.
4. The pupils were divided by random into the two groups after the first test, but it happened that more boys fell into the control group. Of these boys (10), four failed to make any gain. One girl in the control group made no gain and one girl in the experimental group made no gain.
5. Seven pupils of the entire group were repeating the seventh grade. Two of these were in the experimental group and made a gain of three months each. Both were boys.
6. There was no relationship between intelligence quotients and rate of gain.

INDIVIDUAL ANALYSIS SUMMARY

MEMBERS OF EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

Mary had difficulty in social studies due to a slow rate of silent reading, and poorly organized recall. Work in phonics also was indicated to remedy her spelling disability. Remedial work consisted of timed exercises for speed reading with recall questions and careful analysis of spelling words and all new words encountered. Through cooperation and serious effort on her part, gains were made in all parts of the second test except language usage.

Katherine was an emotional problem due to unsettled home conditions. Her efforts were spasmodic and reaction time slow. However, she made definite progress in locating and organizing information which were her chief disabilities.

Patricia lacked correct spelling ability and was slow in comprehending questions given for recall. Help was given in phonetic spelling and drill in speed reading for comprehension and recall. Progress was noted in reading and in spelling on the second test. Her spelling gained eight months.

Florence's ability to analyze words was poor. She also had a limited sight vocabulary. After the period of remedial instruction, she gained three months in reading and one month in spelling.

Marion would not try difficult words and had no method of word analysis. Her spelling ability was inadequate. She progressed three months in spelling and six months in reading.

Steve was retarded two years and had about reached his mental capacity. However, when stress was placed on his weak spots - low sight vocabulary, inadequate word analysis ability and poor attack on new words, -- he was able to raise his reading and word meaning grade three months. The phonetic method was used in reading and both phonetic and kinaesthetic in spelling.

John made excellent progress in spelling. His grade level gained four months. Most of his trouble was in visual perception and he overcame this by constant practice in writing and "looking" to familiarize himself with the forms.

Two pupils made definite progress in spelling by studying words with proper regard to syllabication.

Joyce was the only member of the experimental group who made no progress. In fact, all her scores on the second test were below those of the first test. She realized this and conscientiously continued remedial work for improvement of her standards.

Further Study

Brueckner says,

> Relatively little is known concerning the precise types of remedial treatment that should be applied to most kinds of learning difficulties. This whole field merits extended research. There is no phase of educational method that is more seriously in need of study. 1/

From observations made during this study, it is felt that more time should be spent in remedial work between the times of actual testing. Actual results are slow in showing themselves and cannot be adequately measured over a short period of time.

Although the results in this study were not statistically significant as a whole, progress was noted in individual cases.

1/ Leo J. Brueckner, "Diagnosis and Remedial Teaching," Encyclopedia of Educational Research. New York: The Macmillan Company, 1941, pp. 392-399.

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