

JUN 23 1994

SOME MODERN APPROACHES  
TO THE TEACHING  
OF READING

AN ABSTRACT  
PRESENTED TO THE GRADUATE FACULTY  
OF DANBURY STATE COLLEGE

IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT  
OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE  
MASTER OF SCIENCE

by  
Alice R. Helmer  
August 1963

SOME MODERN APPROACHES  
TO THE TEACHING OF READING

The purpose of this paper is to describe the current approaches used to teach beginning reading in American schools. The controversy that has arisen within recent years concerning the best method(s) of teaching reading has made educators renew interest in the nature of the reading process and the aims of reading and they are aware of need for study to improve the programs.

Since research concurs in the opinion that reading is a complex process and has many facets, the viewpoints of the reading specialist, the psychologist, the sociologist, and the linguist are described to help define the definition of the word "read". These viewpoints are the basis for increasing the scope involved in the teaching of reading as they are influential in the various programs and procedures used to teach children how to read.

The historical background of methods of teaching reading that are influential in present day practices are listed in chronological order to show the evolution of reading from a subject designed to discipline the mind to a process by which pupils are taught to get meaning from the printed page. This history reveals that methods have changed with the philosophy of the times.

The current practices in the teaching of reading reveal that instruction is based on a combination of methods as a result of scientific study in sociology, language, and the psychology of child growth and development. Nine approaches used today--the philosophy, purpose, materials, methods, advantages and disadvantages--are discussed. These nine approaches are: (1) the basic reading approach which is the most widely used today; (2) the experience ap-

approach which utilizes the experiences of the children as reading material; (3) the kinesthetic approach which uses visual, auditory, tactile, and kinesthetic modes of learning based upon tracing of letter forms as an aid to word analysis; (4) the individualized reading approach which is a way of thinking about reading incorporating the concepts of seeking, self-selection, and pacing; (5) the linguistic approach which is a systematic and structural approach giving insight into the relationship between spoken and written language; (6) the phonetic alphabet approach which uses a special alphabet identifying the differences that occur in speech sounds; (7) the phonic approaches which are of controversial issue because of the many different methods used; (8) the audio-visual approaches which educators agree are the most interesting and fruitful of the approaches used, and (9) the programmed learning approach which is still in its infancy and undergoing a great deal of research.

In conclusion, the writer points out that research and investigation into the teaching of reading has changed the concept of reading and what effect it has upon people and our society. As a result, reading instruction has been revised, broadened, and extended in compliance with the new objectives and purposes of reading and reflects the philosophy of our time. The factors that have influenced the changing concept of reading and the various approaches used are discussed. Technological advances in equipment, the wide range of instruction materials, new patterns in curriculum making, the many studies resulting in a better understanding of child development and the learning process, and the newer demands of daily living on reading are all factors that have contributed to the new trends in American reading instruction.