

**AN EVALUATION
OF
FIRST GRADE READING PROGRAMS**

**AN ABSTRACT OF
A THESIS
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**by
Marie Jeanne M. Devanney
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ABSTRACT

The large number of reading programs available to educators today give cause for some evaluative criteria to help educators determine which program best meets the needs of teachers and pupils. Five different programs were evaluated. They include the i.t.a. Early To Read program which is written in a new orthography; The Libbincott Basic Readers which follow a phonetic approach; the Scott Foresman Readers, 1961 ed. - a look say basal approach; The Merrill Linguistic Readers - a purely linguistic program; and an individualized program based on a personalized reading program as described by J. Veatch.

A four page chart was developed, to be used by a group of twenty educators, to record their findings as they studied each of the five programs. A four number scale was used for the recording. The scale rated a zero as non-existent, 1 poor, 2 fair and 3 good. Each of the numbers zero to three had its own column. The evaluator was asked to check the correct column to record his findings. The twenty educators include two administrators and eighteen classroom teachers in grades kindergarten through five. None of the evaluators was familiar with all the programs.

The criteria was developed to meet standards which the author, as an experienced first grade teacher, felt were very necessary to a beginning reading program. The criteria includes items dealing with age characteristics, format, content variety, language content, motivation, vocabulary,

skills, sequential development, and psychological factors. The sub items under the major headings include all the necessary particulars to develop an excellent first grade reading program that would meet the needs of all children in a classroom.

The evaluation was conducted over a six week period. All the necessary materials for each of the five programs was made available to the evaluators. They were free to work on the evaluation during and after school hours. Explanations of the criteria and a description of the individualized program was made available to each of the evaluators along with his checklist.

The results of the evaluation were correlated onto a chart. Each of the responses was tabulated and the number of responses for each program and each criteria were recorded on the chart. An examination of the tabulations on the chart was made and the results were discussed. Many inconsistencies were apparent. Contradictions between the evaluators and the authors of the programs were found.

The area which was involved in the largest number of disagreements between authors and evaluators was the area of language. The authors of the reading program invariably made statements concerning the appropriateness of the language used in its program, stating how real and meaningful it was to children. The evaluators consistently reported negative findings on their part.

The evaluation found most of the programs did not meet

the child's needs in the classroom, did not eliminate frustrations. All but one of the programs provides a specific program meant to help children who are experiencing difficulty in the regular program. The evaluators did not feel the special programs met the objectives they were written for.

The results give the impression that teachers are not capable of evaluating programs they have not used in their classroom. Teachers, to some extent, can not evaluate well when the objective being evaluated is not a part of the teachers manual or the text in question. When personalities, background, experience, and innovativeness are necessary in making a judgement there is total disagreement among the evaluators.

The individualized reading program was found to be the one program which would most significantly meet the needs of teachers and students in beginning reading.