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Comparative Learning Effectiveness in Reading and Language Skills as Taught By Success in Reading and Writing vs,

Jean M. Becker

COMPARATIVE LEARNING EFFECTIVENESS IN READING AND

LANGUAGE SKILLS AS TAUGHT BY

SUCCESS IN READING AND WRITING VS. BASAL READING SERIES

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Digest

The project presented herein was designed to measure in a quantitative way the comparative effectiveness of teaching and learning reading and Language skills in groups taught by the basal reading series and by the Success in Reading and Writing.

A discussion of the rather substantially different approaches in these two teaching methods is presented. The basal reading series is a highly structured, specifically ordered teaching system involving detailed material in the teacher's manual, student readers and workbooks at each level of instruction, Grades K-6.

The Success in Reading and Writing program, on the other hand, while quite structured as to time

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modules and overall teaching approach, is more flexible in several ways:

1. Reading is selected from available material in the everyday environment (e.g. magazines, newspapers, catalogues and lists).

2. The relationship among students and teacher is much more informal and individualized.

3. The Success method appears to generate more challenge and enthusiasm not only in the students but in teachers as well.

To test the effectiveness of the two teaching methods, two different schools were chosen, one as the Experimental Group which had the Success in Reading and Writing program in the second grade, and the Control Group which had the standard basal reading series in the second grade. In each case there were pre-test scores and post-test scores for the beginning and end of the second grade.

The study demonstrates that Success in Reading and Writing produces results at least equal to the Basal Reading Series. There is a strong case that the results are actually statistically and significantly better.

The results are sufficiently encouraging to justify an expansion of the study to include a greater number of schools and covering more students in more grade levels for a broader span of time.

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Chapter I: Development of the Problem

Background

Before the invention of the printing press, reading was largely reserved for the nobility, philosophers, and the church. Few people in the whole world were able to read, and for those who could, it was considered a mark of their class or nobility and the civilized nature of their being. In the last 400 years, reading has taken an increasingly important role, not only in the education of our youth but also as a standard of literacy for countries as a whole. From 1570 to 1900 there was a succession of reading discoveries and rediscoveries. Different combinations of teaching techniques were used - word methods, sentence methods, experience methods, and phonic methods. Among the countries where methods based on the alphabet or phonics are common are Austria, Denmark, Finland, Hungary, India, Sweden, and Thailand to name a few. In such countries, sounds as well as names of the letters are taught so that the new words may be read by putting together the

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sounds of the separate letters. In the United States, the tendency has been toward a balance between the phonic approach and the "look and say" approach to teaching reading.

During the latter half of the 19th and early 20th century, Germany was the leader in reading research. More recently, however, this role has been taken over by the United States. At the end of the 20th century no other country devotes as much effort to the research and the methodology, development of reading tests and texts, remedial reading, and publications as in the United States.

From 1930 to the early 50's it was felt that reading could be properly taught based on eight principles:

1. Word recognition was emphasized so that the child gained comprehension, interpretation, appreciation and application of what was read "right from the start".

2. The child started "meaningful reading" geared to his own experiences.

3. After learning fifty words, more or less, the child started to study the relationships between sounds and letters, that is, phonics. Both before and after phonics

instruction, the child was encouraged to identify new words by picture and meaning clues.

4. Methods of identifying words were taught over a six year period.

5. In isolation, phonics instruction was to be avoided. The child was prevented from isolating and blending sounds to form words. Instead, new words were identified by visual analysis and substitution.

6. There should be repetition of words in readers for grades 1-3. Words should be those used frequently in the vocabulary of children.

7. At the beginning, the pace of instruction should be slow and easy, and a period of readiness or preparatory work should be provided -- longer for those who are not ready for formalized reading instruction.

8. The instruction, ideally, should be given in small groups, preferably in groups of three or four.

In the mid-fifties, these principles were challenged as a result of R. Flesch's book, Why Johnny Can't Read (1955). As a result of this

book a storm of criticism and re-evaluation took place across the country. Whereas before, reading had been the province of educators, publishers, and reading researchers, it now became everybody's business. Not only did parents and columnists become involved, but also editorial writers and even politicians.

As a result of this storm of opinion, various new programs were proposed. Among the ten or twelve such new proposals were various innovations in phonic instruction, including proposals for complete reading programs and the linguistics programs designed by Leonard Bloomfield (1955) who tried to help the child learn "to break the code". In other words, Bloomfield favored teaching the child the printed equivalent for his own oral vocabulary. There were proposals involving changing the alphabet, mainly the ITA (Initial Teaching Alphabet), where up to 44 letters, based upon their sound, were proposed for initial reading. Another was the individualized reading program which used a large variety of reading matter -- juvenile stories, magazines, newspapers, and the reader's own work (Aukerman, 1971).

The Problem

Today, the value and necessity for a good reading program for children cannot be overestimated. As we go into the Information Age, with the billions of bits of information that are generated and the tremendous amount of information storage and retrieval, it has become imperative that the citizens of tomorrow have a firm grasp of native tongue. Publishers recognize this need and also covet the tremendous amount of money that can be generated by successful reading programs. It has been estimated that to issue a complete basal reading program, publishers would invest something in excess of 25 million dollars (Chall, 1967).

With the intense interest in the methodology for teaching reading and the plethora of programs available, it becomes imperative that effectiveness studies be conducted. To get a better perspective of what reading programs are available and to test the effectiveness of two such programs is the purpose of this paper.

Definition of Terms

1. Scope--all reading skills taught to students starting with the simplest ones and

working toward more complicated ones.

2. <u>Sequence</u>--leading students by logical and sequential steps to the mastery of the basic reading skills.

3. <u>Organization</u>--the structure provided in the teacher's manual to guide the teacher on a day by day, minute by minute approach to teaching students.

4. <u>Approach</u>--a description of the method used in teaching reading.

5. <u>Phonics</u>--a means of decoding words by letter sound associations, orally or mentally, giving students effective decoding strategies they can use on their own with the aim of early independence.

6. <u>Success</u>--will be referred to as a reading program that teaches the whole language approach, having students use their enriched vocabularies, use all printed materials in their natural environment, and use writing and spelling every day.

7. <u>Basal</u>--a reading program that includes reading books, workbooks, instructional charts, word cards, vocabulary, comprehension activities,

duplicated masters and test material provided by a publishing company.

The Hypothesis

There is no statistically significant difference in the reading effectiveness and performance of students in the second grade, between those who learned to read by the Success in Reading and Writing approach as compared to those who learned to read with the basal reading series approach.

Limitations of the Study

1. The students selected for the study were from one, rather narrow, geographical locale.

2. The study is limited to reading performance of grade two.

3. The students in the study were identified according to the method of instruction they experienced during the second grade only, either the Success in Reading program or the basal. Their growth in reading during second grade was measured by comparing their performance on pre and post standardized tests.

4. Since it was impractical to have
    controlled laboratory or clinical
    comparisons of the two methods of reading,
    the study is limited to classroom results,
    where the variable of different teachers
    is also involved.

5. The comparison was limited to study of
    only two approaches.

CHAPTER II: Review of Literature

INTRODUCTION

Because of the profusion of literature on the art or science of teaching reading, it would be inappropriate to present all of the contrasting views represented by the ten or twelve different schools of successful reading methodology. Instead, since this paper is primarily concerned with the comparison between the basal reading series, the one most commonly used in American schools today, and the new Success in Beginning Reading and Writing program, the review and description of these two methods will be the only two described.

In providing the background for this study it is necessary at the onset to understand the two reading systems being compared -- the basal reading series and the Success in Reading and Writing Two sources are used primarily for this background material: Jeanne Chall in material describing the basal reading series, and Anne Adams espousing the Success approach.

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In addition to these two, however, a number of other authorities have presented material and opinions on one or the other of these two systems. These are as outlined in the Bibliography at the end of this paper. It should be noted though that persons advocating the basal reading series include such writers and researchers as N. P. Criscuolo (1984), Delores Durkin (1984), W. K. Durr (1985), Kim Marshall (1983), E. W. McKinney (1980) and others. On the other hand, advocates of the Success program include B. L. Gotlesman (1980), A. Gronowsky (1978), M. Hunter (1976), C. Pearsons (1980), W. Smith and E. L. Bebenese (1983), to name a few.

Basal Reading Series

If one's exposure to the basal reading series were limited to what one reads in Time, Newsweek, daily newspapers or current periodicals, one would get the impression that it was composed of such repetitive and silly sentences as "Jump, Spot, jump!", "Down, boy, down!", " Go! Go! Go!", or "Look, Mary, look!"

Actually a basal reading series is one of the most carefully planned, executed, extensive and

It consists of presenting a total reading program to give teachers a manual outlining exactly how they should teach reading (the teachers manual), a collection of stories and selections for pupils to read (the readers) and exercises for additional practice (the workbooks).

A basal series is written by a team of specialists. It consists of professional writers, teachers who have become writers, and regular classroom teachers. The head of the team is quite frequently a professor of education. The team also includes specialists such as reading experts, psychologists, linguists, people with degrees in literature, and other similar professionals.

The series generally starts with a pre-reading program -- one, two or three reading readiness books for kindergarten or grade one. Then come the "graded" readers -- three or more small pre-primers which are followed by the first hardcover book, the primer, and then the first reader; the 1-2 book.

Typically, these books are used by children in the first grade. From then on, the typical basal reading series has a book for each half of the second grade - the 2-1 and the 2-2 books, and

similar books for the third through sixth grade. With each reader goes a consumable paper covered book called the workbook which contains a variety of additional exercises. Each reader also has a teachers guide book, a manual giving specific detailed instructions to the teacher on how to teach from the readers and the workbook. In addition, schools may purchase additional charts, tests, and other aids. In all, it is quite a tremendous volume of printed material. It has been estimated that if all of the materials of the complete program, from grades one through three were to be obtained, one copy of each such piece of material would fill a storage room.

The basal series is the predominantly used system in American schools today. It has been estimated that it is used by over 95% of all first grade teachers, and over 90% of all teachers in the second and third grade (Chall, 1967).

With the use of basals also comes their influence on teachers. In independant surveys of teachers' opinions, it has been found that over 65% of all elementary school teachers either strongly or mostly agree with the statement "the suggestions

to teachers found in reading manuals are based on definite scientific proof". Only seven percent either mostly or strongly disagree (Chall, 1967).

Elementary school principals followed the same pattern, with most either strongly or mostly agreeing with the statement.

It is of interest therefore to find that reading experts are not nearly as convinced as teachers. Only 32% of them either "strongly or mostly" agreed with the statement, whereas 46% either "mostly or strongly" disagreed (Chall, 1967). Thus, it is apparent that the experts think much less highly of their own product; perhaps the teachers -- and the principals -- have been over-sold. In any event, for all practical purposes, this is the basic series. Americans today are primarily taught reading using a basal reading series instructional program.

The Elements of the Basal Reading Series

The basal reading series generally consists of teaching new words in the context of telling stories. First there is the preparation for reading the story. The teacher establishes the background, tells about the story, and asks questions to arouse

interest. The guidebooks generally provide the exact phrases for the teacher to use. Next is the presentation of new words and practice on them. Again, the guidebooks tell the teacher which words to teach and how they should be practiced. Third there is guided reading and interpreting the story. Here the teacher is given specific questions to ask and is told what points to emphasize while the children read the story. A section also includes suggestions of rereading the story, usually indicating a definite purpose for rereading. Finally, there are suggested follow-up activities -- activities and exercises that can be used following each story or lesson.

Some basal readers use a sight or whole word method to teach reading to grades one through three. In other words, the total program includes some instruction in letters and sounds, but children are mainly taught to recognize words as wholes first. This emphasis is evident in the rate in which words are introduced and the way they are taught throughout the first three grades.

Reading experts analyzing these programs have pointed out that the pre-primers introduce one to

two new words per story. The first grade child usually sees more pictures per story than new words. By the third grade the pupil receives about 12 new words per story, but because the stories for older children are longer, the number of new words per hundred running words of text remain about the same, or perhaps even decreases (Chall, 1967).

These new words are words that the child has not yet been taught to recognize (in print). In normal conversation, the pupil can likely use correctly and understand any of these words. The average first grader can probably accurately use and understand an average of 4,000 different words. Yet, in the typical third grade Basal reader the total reading vocabulary is only about 1,500 different words (Chall, 1967).

Emphasis on Understanding the Story

The basal reading programs emphasize practice in reading stories for understanding and enjoyment. The emphasis in the manual would indicate that children want to read only because they are promised an enjoyable story full of surprises and fun. This emphasis does not change much from the pre-primers through the third grade. The

involvement of the teacher and the amount of activity suggested in the teachers manual is very high. In the Scott, Foresman guidebook it is suggested that the teacher ask an average of about 50 questions per story. Thus, for the typical pre-primer story that averages 64 running words, the teacher is to use 54 separate questions, directions or statements to guide the pupil, or almost one question for each word the child reads. In fact, the teacher is expected to speak about seven words to one read by the pupil. Throughout the first grade if the teacher follows this manual she would speak more words per story than the child would read (Chall, 1967).

The Ginn guidebook suggests less questioning and directing, but the teacher still is expected to speak more words than the pupil reads in the pre-primers and the primer.

Another facet of the teacher's manual is that frequently it focuses the pupil's attention unduly on the non-textual aspects of the story. In other words, many of the questions and the directing of attention suggested to the teacher are about the pictures rather than about the text. Many of the

questions can be answered, either from the pupil's own experience, or from looking at the pictures only without any reference to reading. From the first through the third grades, a considerable portion of guidance is aimed at illiciting expressions of feeling removed from both the pictures and the text. Even in the 3-1 readers about 30% of the questions can be answered without reading the words (Chall, 1967).

It is interesting to compare the changes that occured in the period 1920 to 1962. During this 42-year period in the basal reading series, published by Scott, Foresman, the number of pictures per hundred running words increased steadily, surpassing the vocabulary word load (number of new words per hundred running words) in the 1956 edition (Chall, 1967).

The teachers manuals have changed even more than the readers. They have grown steadily. The introductory chapters of the teachers manual have become veritable textbooks on the teaching of reading. There appears to be a stabilization of this heavy load in the more recent editions (Chall, 1967).

In the 1920 edition, over 500 words of instruction to the teacher accompanied the average lesson. In more recent editions this has increased so that for each lesson the teacher is given detailed instructions covering five pages of print, or over 2,000 words (Chall, 1967).

Summary of the Basal Reading Series

The basal reading series places its greatest thrust, almost its entire emphasis, on reading for meaning -- in other words, reading to get at the story, or the reward or enjoyment that comes from such an exercise. It places heavy reliance on the word method, continually stressing throughout the first three grades the whole word or configuration approach to learning words, with only minor alphabetic phonic aspects to these words. Little emphasis is placed on decoding the message by use of alphabetic sounds or configurations. Secondly, the basal reading series stresses, even in the first grade, meaning appreciation and application. In this paper, we will explore whether that is really necessary or whether reading for its own sake can become an enjoyable experience for the pupil.

Next, the basal reading series places heavy emphasis on specific detailed instructions in the teachers' manual -- so much so that, as pointed out, the first grade teacher is expected to talk more than the pupils read.

Does the teacher need so much guidance in teaching? Is it necessary for the manuals to be so specific and so explicit?

With the heavy emphasis of the basal reading series on meaning, appreciation and application, there is little emphasis on the decoding of words, spelling combinations or sounds. This will be another subject which we will compare in this paper.

The basal reading series controls carefully the number of new words introduced in each lesson. In this paper we will also see the comparison of this highly structured, but highly limited, process in the introduction of words in comparison to the more flexible but still structured programs of the Success in Reading which use current periodicals and other available reading materials.

Success in Beginning Reading and Writing

In 1971, Anne Adams became director of the Duke University Reading Center. Almost immediately she saw what appeared to be a disasterous need for some improvement in the reading program. She was urged by the schools of Durham, North Carolina, to provide help in finding an effective reading program -- better than they had. After researching traditional approaches for elements which she felt were worthwhile, Professor Adams put together what is now known as Success in Reading and Writing.

The program was introduced in the Durham school district in 1976 and proved itself in the first two years. No child finished as a non reader and reading test scores jumped from the 23rd to the 86th percentile (Adams, 1978).

The program has since been adopted in a steadily growing number of schools throughout the United States.

Success - Philosophy

Success in Reading and Writing is a structured, yet flexible, non-basal concept based on three premises about children and one premise about

teachers:

First Premise: Children want to read and write.

To the extent that children recognize the importance of words and literacy as key to effective communication, they will strive very intently to master reading and writing skills.

From this premise stems Success' reliance on the body of reading materials used in the environment rather than relying solely on the basal readers and workbooks, which might make reading seem to children merely a part and an artifice of the education establishment. Success students read:

o   Newspapers, library books, magazines

o   Catalogs, telephone directories

o   Science pamphlets, museum brochures, business flyers

o   Text books and any other print resources

Use of such materials allows much more flexibility to the student in reading and encourages more parental involvement in the reading process. (It also reduces the cost of the school's reading program to an average of $9-10 per child.)

Second Premise: Children are accomplished learners even before they enter school.

Most of them possess rich vocabularies which

are valuable resources for further learning. Some traditional basal readers have limited the first grade child to as few as 40 "new" words during the year. Estimates are that the average six year old possesses a speaking vocabulary of 4,000 words (Adams, 1978). Anne Adams reasoned that these student vocabularies could be used:

o   To act as a spur to enhanced learning in the class and interaction between members of the class.

o   As tools for facilitating individual learning by allowing the student to start with words familiar and interesting to him or her.

Third Premise: Childrens' learning is enhanced when the learning environment allows students to have a positive self concept.

Professor Adams was very disturbed that the grouping according to ability usually practiced in the traditional reading systems required the introduction of an exaggerated and counter-productive sense of "who's smart and who's dumb" in students' (and their parents') minds. She was especially concerned for the self concepts of those

who were labeled as slow learners from the first day of their school experience and remained stuck in that slot no matter how well they achieved.

Her Success formula dispensed with reading groups and freed the slow learners of that burden. On the other hand, high achievers were also allowed more freedom to go at their own more rapid rate than when constrained by the prescribed pace of the entire reading group. In addition, because of each individual's unique experience, every child was able to contribute something, and to earn their classmates' respect and admiration. The Success system thus capitalized on student strengths rather than teaching to weaknesses.

Fourth Premise: Teachers are professionals who have intelligent and creative contributions to make to the classroom experience.

Anne Adams believed that too many traditional reading systems over-specified what the teacher's input should be: what stories the instructors should teach, what questions could be asked, what the assignment should be, and even such instructions as: "Continue to read". She recognized that many teachers were becoming bored or burned out

because they felt their role to be that of a monitor rather than a leader in the classroom.

Success, on the other hand, allows the teacher to tailor material to specific class and individual needs and to blend reading and writing experiences with science, math, and other curricula. But what is most important, the teacher, a decision-maker is placed back in the role she should have of being the teacher and the leader of the group.

Organization

Success is a structured, yet flexible, management system. Daily components of the program at each grade level are four modules, each approximately 30 minutes long:

o Phonic word attack skills/student vocabulary

o Writing

o Purposeful reading in academic, cultural, and current events areas

o Reading for pleasure

Each module allows some teacher centered classroom time and also some work time during which the teacher circulates among the students to help each individual. Anne Adams believed it was especially important to allow time for teachers to

give students positive feedback: by listening to the student read aloud; or by reading back to the student the student's own composition; or perhaps by talking to the student about a word he or she had found. The time given to each individual module is fairly balanced, so children learn to budget their time and no one phase in the program preempts time belonging to the other. The teacher keeps files of each student's work in each area to demonstrate increasing proficiency. In addition, charts developed by the class during the phonics module sessions are displayed in the room to allow student review.

Objectives

The goal at every Success level is to develop in students a love and appreciation of words and communication and a sense of discovery and pride in the student's ability as a communicator. Additionally, more specific objectives are outlined for each grade:

o   By the end of the year, each kindergarten student will have had many opportunities to associate words with tangible items and intangible concepts in pictures.

o Each first grade student will have read or tried to read 300 library books, the daily newspaper, different kinds of textbooks, and have written poems, stories, lists, as well as give literal and interpretive answers to questions.

o Each second grader will have had the opportunity to read 350 library books, daily newspapers, current magazines, text books and other materials relevant to their grade level and works that contain a variety of writing skill emphases. The student also will have had daily practice in creative or factual writing and proofreading.

o The third grade level encompasses second grade objectives, and also adds reading experience in science, social studies, math, and music textbooks for different grade levels; reading in works of art; and more extensive writing experience with words, phrases, and paragraphs containing vocabulary from students in the class.

o The fourth grade objectives include a goal of 500 library books; daily oral explanations to

the teacher and/or a classmate of the reason(s) for interpretation of information read or written by the student; daily attention to spelling; and reading experience with material from businesses and agencies.

o The fifth and sixth grade programs are designed to reinforce previous experience. Among "packaged" reading systems Success is unique in its constant provision for writing exercise which parallels the reading experience. Children have the opportunity to write every day.

Thus the advocates of Success in Reading and Writing claim that the system combines the decoding exercise thought so important by Leonard Bloomfield (1955), the pleasure in learning to read about things that the students themselves pick out, drawing upon reading material from their environment and at their proper grade level, and finally, the wide variety of materials available with each student proceeding at his or her own pace.

Educators' Role in the Reading Process

There is a great need for training of educators who will be dealing with the Success in

Reading and Writing Program in the philosophy of
the whole language approach to reading and writing.
In this regard, there must be a fair hearing and
understanding on the part of superintendents and
principals as well as the teachers. The whole
language approach emphasizes the interrelatedness
of reading, writing, listening, speaking and
spelling.

Usually, educators, including principals and
superintendents, are given the prepared basal
program and need only to follow this in their
regular teaching process. The demands on the
teacher are quite different, however, in the
Success in Reading and Writing program. The teach-
er in these programs generally must be more know-
ledgeable about the subject, must be goal oriented,
experimental, professional, secure, creative and
innovative since much of progress in the Success in
Reading and Writing program is dependent upon the
enthusiasm and support of the teacher and the
relationship of the teacher to the students.

According to Frank Smith in his book Reading
Without Nonsense (1983), nine rules of reading
instruction that a teacher would do well NOT to
follow are:

1. Aim for early mastery of the rules of reading.

2. Ensure that phonic skills are learned and used.

3. Teach letters or words one at a time, making sure each one is learned before moving on.

4. Make word-perfect reading a prime objective.

5. Discourage guessing; insist that children read carefully.

6. Insist upon word-perfect reading.

7. Correct errors immediately.

8. Identify and treat problem readers as early as possible.

9. Use every opportunity during reading instruction to improve spelling and written expression, and also insist on the best possible spoken English.

[Complete text of Frank Smith's nine Rule Not to Follow are included as Appendix A.]

Becoming a Nation of Readers

As pointed out in the report of the Commission on Reading of the National Institute of Education,

Becoming a Nation of Readers (1985), what the child who is least ready for systematic reading instruction needs most is ample experience with oral and printed language and early opportunities to begin to write. This report also points out that "reading" must be seen as part of a child's general language development and not as a discreet skill isolated from listening, speaking and writing. Children must have at least a basic vocabulary, a reasonable range of knowledge about the world around them and the ability to talk about their knowledge. These abilities form the basis for comprehending text (Anderson, 1985).

Listening comprehension proficiency in kindergarten and the first grade is a moderately good predictor of the level of reading comprehension obtained by the third grade. Evidence about the later role of listening comprehension is even stronger. In a study involving a nationwide sample of thousands of students, listening comprehension in the fifth grade was the best predictor of performance on a range of aptitude and achievement tests in high school, better than any other measure of aptitude or achievement (Anderson, 1985).

Oral language experience in the classroom is especially important for the children who have not grown up with oral language that resembles the language of schools and books. Thus, kindergarten teachers need to capitalize on every opportunity to engage children in thoughtful discussion. Story-book reading is an especially good setting for such discussions. As they listen to stories and discuss them, children will learn to make inferences about plots and characters. While oral language facility is necessary for success in reading, it is not sufficient. To learn to read, children's environment must also be rich in experiences with written language (Anderson, 1985).

Research establishes that children learning to read require concepts about the broader purposes of printed language, as well as the specific skills required to recognize letters and words, and match letters and sounds. Learning about reading and writing ought to occur in situations where written language serves functions such as to entertain (as in books), to inform (as in instruction on packages), or to direct (as on traffic signs). In other words children need to learn about the

functions of written language and about what adults mean when they talk about "reading". Children must also learn about the relationship between oral and written language and the relationship between written language and meaning. For example, they need to know about the relationship between the letter combination STOP, the spoken word "stop", and the meaning of stop - to cease motion.

Even children from homes where adults have not provided them with extensive exposure to printed language have some knowledge about reading and writing that can form the basis for early instruction. For instance, they may be able to recognize words that appear on cereal boxes, T-shirts, billboards, or toys. However, they often jump to incorrect conclusions about words: They may think that the brand name on a toothpaste tube says "toothpaste", "or brush your teeth", indicating that they're paying more attention to the context than to the specific features of the word. Nonetheless, familiar words are especially useful by teaching children letter names and letter sound relationships, because children can learn to recognize familiar words prior to knowing all the

letters. In conclusion, kindergarten teachers must be mindful of the fact that there can be an extraordinarily wide variation in the knowledge that kindergarteners have about reading. Some children may not have even the most basic ideas. When a concept such as "a word" and concepts about the function of printed language are taken for granted by teachers and the publishers of instructional materials, children can be left huffing and puffing over the sounds that letters make with only the faintest idea of what they are doing. Early instruction must provide these children with underlying concepts about the functions of reading and writing as well as with specific information about letters, sounds, and words. On the other hand, for those who come to kindergarten already reading simple stories, none of this basic teaching may be necessary. Thus, the essential principle of all good teaching -- estimate where each student is and build on that base -- is doubly important for kindergarten teachers.

Becoming a Nation of Readers, published in 1985, suggests that a highly structured formalized driven program which requires that each pupil

conform to the program's pace and direction may not be the ultimate answer. In contrast, the Success in Reading and Writing program provides different speeds and different depths and is subject to a lot more individualization and a more personal handling of instruction between the teacher and the student.

Enthusiasm in Teaching and Learning

Other observable factors in schools having the Success in Reading and Writing Program are the much higher degree of interest that is generally observed on the part of the teachers in their work, and the enthusiasm with which they present their material, given that they are more challenged to draw on many sources familiar to the students for the application of the teaching method. "The first day of school" no longer occupies the very special (and sometimes frightening and traumatic) place it once did. Today with such a large percentage of children already having attended pre-school from as early an age as 3, the 5 or 6 year old has a more experienced air than used to be the case.

The first day in kindergarten, and even more so in the first and second grades still does pose a tremendous challenge and opportunity for learning

-- an opportunity shared by the child and the teacher.

It does not have the frightening aspects of Carlo Collodi's "Pinnochio" as in the animated Walt Disney feature seen by most children in which Pinnochio is kidnapped on the way to school (thus beginning his odyssey of woe). But it does have the excitement of Pinnochio when, in the book, he starts out to school carrying his new spelling book, he says to himself, "Today at school I will learn to read at once; then tomorrow I will begin to write, and the day after tomorrow to learn numbers." I have seen the same enthusiasm and interest in the majority of the pupils in the Success program. In addition, Success in Reading and Writing appears to have advantages in (1) being more flexible than the basal, (2) meeting individual needs of each student so that each pupil can proceed at his own speed and level of confidence, (3) permitting use of his enriched vocabulary, (4) using materials - such as magazines, newspapers, and catalogs, and (5) is a great deal more adaptable compared to the structured basal reading series.

Summary

It will be the purpose of this paper to compare these two ways -- the well established basal reading method currently used in over 90% of the elementary grades and the relatively newer Success in Reading and Writing to determine whether this structured, yet much more flexible system can approach the performance and results of the basal system.

Chapter III: Description,
Procedures and Data Collection

Introduction

The points raised in the previous chapter suggest that a comparison of results using the two methods (basal and Success) would be interesting, particularly if some quantifiable data could be generated with one half the students using the basal and the other, Success. As described previously, these two methods differ greatly. In the basal reading series, there is a highly detailed and structured series of workbooks instructions and materials which literally "drive" the reading program. In the Success in Reading and Writing program, there is a wide variety of materials available to use as sources and while the classroom procedures are structured, the program is much more flexible and elicits a greater variation in the interaction between the teacher and the students.

Treatment Procedures

In order to test the effectiveness of these two methods, two different schools were chosen,

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one, the experimental group, had the <u>Success in</u> <u>Reading Program</u> in the second grade, and the control group school which had the standard basal reading series in the second grade. In each case there were pre-test and post-test scores for the beginning and end of the second grade.

We have comparable groups of nearby schools in the same school district having approximately the same profile of student population (racial background, gender, social environment, socio-economic status, and so forth) with quantitative test results showing how they compared under the two methods of teaching. In each of the two schools, the first grade had been taught with a basal reading series. In the second grade from the very first day, the control group was taught with the basal again, whereas the experimental group was taught with the <u>Success</u> method.

The Comprehensive Test of Basic Skills was given to each of the two groups at the beginning of the 1981-82 school year and the data were gathered and analyzed. Another form of the same test was given after the second grade and was similarly treated. An analysis was made of the reading sub-

test scores, graphs were then prepared showing the pre-test percentiles as compared to the post-test percentiles at each of the two schools with the various sub-categories of reading: spelling, language, math, and then the total. These data are presented in graphic form in Appendix B and in tabular form on pages 44 and 45.

Chapter IV: Presentation and
Discussion of Data and Results

Introduction

It is important when viewing the test results to keep in mind the hypothesis: "There is no statistically significant difference in the reading effectiveness and performance of students in the second grade, learning their reading by the Success in Reading and Writing as compared with the basal reading series."

Test of Hypothesis and Statistical Tables

From the data collected both in statistical and in graph form, it is possible to test the validity of the hypothesis. The pre-test was administered in September 1981 and the post-test was administered in April 1982 on both the experimental and control groups. Of note is that both groups showed better than the average gain in reading achievement as measured by the CTBS. The mean gain for the control group was 9.4 months, whereas the mean or average gain for the experimental group was 13.3 months. However, we

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need to know whether the gain in the Experimental Group is significantly higher than the gain in the Control Group. It is obvious that there was a greater gain in the experimental group (13.3 months) than in the control group (9.4 months). The question is: Is that difference significant? In order to answer that question, a T-Test was run and found to result in a "T" value of 1.5948. That value, given the degrees of freedom, is not significant at either the 0.01 or the 0.05 level. It is however significant at the 0.10 level. Simply stated, that means that there were greater gains in reading achievment among the Experimental students than among the Control students and that these gains can be attributed to the program actually used with a degree of confidence of 90%.

An examination also was made of the language sub-test scores on the CTBS for both groups. There, the Experimental students gained 16.2 months between pre and post test periods and the Control students 14.9 months. That, again, is obviously a substantial gain for both groups. The question is whether or not the higher gain in the Experimental group is significantly greater than the gain in the Control group. Again, a T-Test was run. In this

case we found the difference between the two groups is <u>not</u> statistically significant. The "T" value was .8108. These data are also shown in the graphical form in Appendix B which presents the pretest percentiles for each of the modes, reading, spelling, language, math and total for the control group and the experimental group. Compare these then with the post test percentiles showing the significantly higher results and the increasingly greater disparity between the gains in the experimental group as compared to the control. Separate graphs in this same appendix show the pre and post-test scores for each of the two schools individually.

From these data I must conclude that the Experimental students, taught with the <u>Success in Reading and Writing</u> program showed a statistically significant improvement in reading skill development compared to the Control group students taught with the basal reading series. In addition, there is the strong indication that the language skill learning was also improved more by the <u>Success in Reading and Writing</u> although it could not be proven statistically as a part of this study.

SUMMARY

In the review of the data collected, it appears that in comparable population profile classes, differing primarily in the method by which they were taught reading and writing that the results are statistically and significantly better using the Success in Reading and Writing program. The same degree of improvement was not observed in the language subtest, although even here there was a noticeably greater improvement in the Experimental Group compared to the Control Group.

	Reading	
Entry	Control	Experimental
(1)	6	15
(2)	1	12
(3)	5	5
(4)	-15	24
(5)	10	6
(6)	20	8
(7)	5	7
(8)	15	15
(9)	16	16
(10)	18	10
(11)	20	3
(12)	16	15
(13)	21	6
(14)	10	8
(15)	8	11
(16)	14	15
(17)	6	4
(18)	-14	11
(19)	8	27
(20)	16	17
(21)	-1	28
(22)	21	9
(23)	20	4
(24)	15	15
(25)	14	-5
(26)	10	9
(27)	15	9
(28)	0	13
(29)	8	38
(30)	11	44
(31)	19	7
(32)	15	13
(33)	12	23
(34)	18	27
(35)	4	0
(36)	1	7
(37)	12	7
(38)		2
(39)		12
(40)		19
(41)		-3
(42)		30
T-Value		1.59481128
Degrees of Freedom		77

Mean Gain:

Experimental	13.3 months
Control	9.4 months

	Language	
Entry	Control	Experimental
(1)	23	20
(2)	8	3
(3)	26	10
(4)	7	8
(5)	11	13
(6)	14	9
(7)	26	16
(8)	17	21
(9)	34	28
(10)	20	6
(11)	27	6
(12)	12	13
(13)	9	53
(14)	12	32
(15)	11	24
(16)	12	20
(17)	12	15
(18)	23	20
(19)	32	12
(20)	7	22
(21)	27	22
(22)	9	12
(23)	6	32
(24)	24	24
(25)	3	22
(26)	10	12
(27)	14	19
(28)	10	16
(29)	6	19
(30)	23	10
(31)	20	29
(32)	9	22
(33)	9	6
(34)	7	12
(35)	7	0
(36)	9	9
(37)	7	6
(38)	9	8
(39)		14
(40)		14
(41)		13
(42)		7
T-Value		.810791924
Degrees of Freedom		78

Mean Gain:

Experimental	16.2 months
Control	14.9 months

Chapter V: Summary, Discussion,

and Recommendations for Further Study

Summary

As a result of findings presented herein, that the Success in Reading and Writing Program does present statistically significantly better in reading achievements than the basal reading series, and because of the many other attributes of this program it appears that this study should be continued on a broader scale.   It should be recognized that these results were for one year only, covered only the second grade, and therefore had a limited scope.   Limitations as pointed out previously could be the difference in individual teachers or any subtle, not readily observable differences in the pupil population environment.

It appears completely sound, however, to conclude that the Success in Reading and Writing program does indeed equal in teaching effectiveness with the basal reading series.   The clear implication is that it not only equals, but exceeds the

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effectiveness of the basal program in the experiment reported here.

Discussion

The study presented herein and the test scores definitely demonstrate fthat the Success in Reading and Writing program is superior to the basal reading series.

This is believed due in part to the following:

1. A positive attitude, an acceptance, and enthusiasm is generated in the students. They feel good about themselves, and they learn to take risks at reading all the materials in their natural environment.

2. The students get the opportunity to write every day. They learn to express themselves in written form as easily as they speak. Examples of their writing include stories, poems, memos, lists and advice. A few samples of their writings are shown in Appendix C.

3. There is a scheduled "time on task". The Success program provides students a total, organized, whole language approach. Students know what is expected of them each day.

4. All subject matter is integrated. The student is exposed to such subjects as Science, Math, Social Sciences, Music, Art, Reading, Language Arts -- all within the Success modules.

For example, in one lesson students use Math flashcards and then write a math word problem and draw a picture describing it.

5. Teachers are encouraged to be and have the opportunity to develop as being the professionals that they are. They teach enthusiastically in a wide diversity of modes: they are positive and truly meet the individual needs of each student.

Recommendations for Further Study

It is believed to be very worthwhile to broaden the scope of the present study to include a continuum of grades K-6 and see if the advantages demonstrated for this isolated grade two performance carries through to the upper grades, not only in speed and breadth of the reading program but in the comprehension possible on the part of the students.

It is believed, further, that the encouraging indications as demonstrated in this study should be expanded to include results from other school

districts providing a cross-section of different student profiles. Also, the sheer scope of the study should be expanded so as to eliminate as much as possible the individual variation between the results obtained by individual teachers using one method or the other. Finally, the matter of pupil profile should be more carefully examined to be .pa sure that comparable groups are tested using the two different methods.

In conclusion, the hypothesis that there is no statistical difference in the reading effectiveness in the performance of students learning their reading by Success in Reading and Writing as compared to the basal reading series was rejected. There is every indication that the Success in Reading and Writing program approach may result in superior achievement gain.

Appendix A

Nine Rules Not to Follow

Frank Smith, 1983
"Reading Without Nonsense"

1. <u>Aim</u> <u>for</u> <u>early</u> <u>mastery</u> <u>of</u> <u>the</u> <u>rules</u> <u>of</u> <u>reading.</u>
There are no rules of reading, at least none that
can be specified with sufficient precision to teach
a child. The implicit knowledge of how to read
that all readers have acquired has been developed
through reading, and not through exercises or
drills. The notion that there are rules that will
help children to read completely misses the fact
that the only thing that improves reading is prac-
tice. Only reading provides the necessary practice
in identifying words on sight (not figuring them
out letter by letter); in using prior knowledge and
context to identify the words and meanings with a
minimum of visual information (not struggling
blindly and pointlessly to identify one word after
another); in predicting looking for meaning,
reading fast rather than slowly, confidently rather
than cautiously; in using short-term memory effi-
ciently so that the brain is not overloaded and
even the most meaningful of text made nonsense.
Most of the "drills" that children are given to
help them to read become useful - and easy - only
after some skill in reading has been developed.
Better readers always seem to be more efficient at

knowing the alphabet, knowing the "sounds of letters" and blending letter sounds together to make words because these are all tasks that become deceptively simple with experience in reading although they are difficult if not impossible before children understand what reading is about.

2. Ensure that phonic skills are learned and used. Children do not need a mastery of phonics in order to identify words that they have not met in print before. The very complexity and unreliability of the 166 rules and scores of exceptions make it remarkable that anyone should think that inability to use phonics explains "Why Johnny can't read". Once a child discovers what a word is in a meaningful context, learning to recognize it on another occasion is as simple as learning to recognize a face on a second occasion, and does not need phonics. And discovering what a word is in the first place is usually most efficiently accomplished by asking someone, listening to someone else read the word, or using context to provide a substantial clue.

3. Teach letters or words one at a time, making

sure each one is learned before moving on. Another widespread misconception is that children have difficulty remembering the names of objects and words and letters, and that only constant repetition will help fix a name in a child's mind. For a dozen years from about the age of two or three children learn at least a thousand new words a year, often after hearing a word used once or twice. It has been calculated that eight-year-old children must learn nearly thirty new words daily. Children do not get the credit for such fantastic feats of learning because the learning takes place so effortlessly and inconspicuously.

Children do not learn all these names by rote - by studying lists of a dozen new words at a time or by doing exercises given to them by adults. Children learn by making sense of words that are meaningful to them; through comprehension they learn. We have not become fluent readers by learning how to recognize fifty thousand or more written words on sight; we have learned to recognize all these words in the process of becoming fluent readers, in the act of meaningful reading.

4. <u>Make word-perfect reading a prime objective.</u>
Because of the limit to the amount of new visual
information from the eyes that the brain can
handle, and the limit to how much can be retained
in short-term memory, emphasis on visual informa-
tion makes reading difficult. To read efficiently
- and also to learn to read - it is necessary to
make maximum use of what is already known. It
usually does not matter if readers fail to get a
word or two exactly right - provided they are
reading sense - because context will make it clear
if an error that makes a difference has been made.
On the other hand, overconcern with accuracy has
the effect of directing too much attention to indi-
vidual words, in effect treating them as if they
had no context, with the result that the visual
system is overwhelmed, making comprehension and
even accurate word identification impossible. Most
children seem to know instinctively that reading is
a matter of getting meaning correct rather than
individual words, no doubt because the strain of
focussing undue attention on individual words makes
reading a difficult and nonsensical activity.

5. <u>Discourage guessing; insist that children read</u>

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5. <u>Discourage guessing; insist that children read</u>

<u>carefully.</u> I have stressed the importance of predication in comprehension and in the identification of unfamiliar words. Efficient readers make maximum use of a minimum of visual information because taking too many pains to avoid making mistakes will have the paradoxical effect of interfering with comprehension and accuracy.

Even in learning to read - in fact especially in learning to read - slow progress has only one consequence, it adds to the burden on short-term memory, making comprehension less likely and thus reading more difficult. For children as for fluent readers, the only practical solution at times of difficulty is to speed up, to read on, and to try to find the general sense that will make it possible to go back, if necessary, to identify or comprehend specific words.

6. <u>Insist</u> <u>upon</u> <u>word-perfect</u> <u>reading.</u> No one can learn names correctly, whether of dogs and cats, letters or words, unless there is a possibility of being wrong. The "experimental" hypothesis-testing basis of learning necessitates taking chances. Children learn naturally not by rote memorization or by reckless guessing but by trying to assess

whether something might be the case. Adults who treat reading errors as stupidities, jokes or transgressions - or who encourage other children to do the same - do more than misperceive the basic nature of reading, they also block the principal way in which reading is learned. Many of the apparent mistakes that children make in reading are not errors of sense, but rather a matter of their being unable to do an additional task at the same time as reading meaningfully, namely speaking in a language that is unfamiliar to them. It is not uncommon for any reader - beginner or experienced - to read aloud a sentence like "Back she came" as "She came back", or "He has no money" as "He hasn't any money" or even "He ain't got no money". The reader is getting the meaning of the text well enough but is putting it into a familiar language, the way the reader would normally talk. It is unreasonable to expect children not only to understand text but to speak aloud in a particular language style that may seem forced, artificial and even nonsensical to them.

7. <u>Correct errors immediately.</u> A certain way to make children anxious, hesitant, and otherwise

inefficient readers is to jump on errors the moment they occur. This discouraging habit is sometimes justified as "providing immediate feedback", but in fact it may be feedback that is not relevant to what the child is trying to do, and it may in the long run discourage children from relying on their own judgment for self- correction when they have made a mistake. Not only can correction come too soon, it can be misguided. A child reading aloud in class who pauses before a word is frequently supplied with that word instantly, by other children if not by the teacher. But the pause may not reflect doubt about what that particular word is, the child may already have made a tentative silent identification and be wondering what that word has to do with words that have already been read or even with what the child has already seen coming up a few words ahead. Once again a word-by-word emphasis can have the result of persuading a learner that reading is an activity in which sense plays little part.

8. Identify and treat problem readers as early as possible. There are many reasons why children may seem to make slow progress at the beginning of

learning to read. They may not yet understand what reading is about, they may not be interested in learning to read, they may be antagonistic towards the teacher or other adults who want them to learn to read, they may resent the whole idea of school. They may not understand the language in which their school books are written, or the language that their teacher uses to talk about reading. They may even have started off on the wrong foot - possibly because they have learned too well, for example by assimilating the notion that if they learn how to decode and identify individual words they will be able to read and sense will take care of itself.

There are two reasons why identifying such children as problem readers or as "handicapped" or learning disabled in some way is not a good way to help them. The first reason is that children so labelled immediately become anxious, they expect not to perform as well as other children, and their general perception of their own abilities suffers. Even in the short run, and for competent readers, such attitudes are completely disabling. Create anxiety in a competent reader (for example by providing difficult material) and reading can be

made almost impossible. The reader begins to strive for accuracy, pays far too much attention to every word, and is practically blinded by tunnel vision and the overload on short-term memory. To label children as problem readers early in their lives may create a problem where there was no need for one originally.

The second reason why the label of "poor reader" can be so disabling to children - all the way through their school careers - is that very often the "solution" for such a problem is more of the same treatment that caused it in the first place. Children identified as poor readers are often deprived of opportunities to read, put onto the much harder task of trying to sound out isolated words or words in meaningless sequences. Children who have had reading problems for ten years do not need more of the conditions that have contributed to their failure.
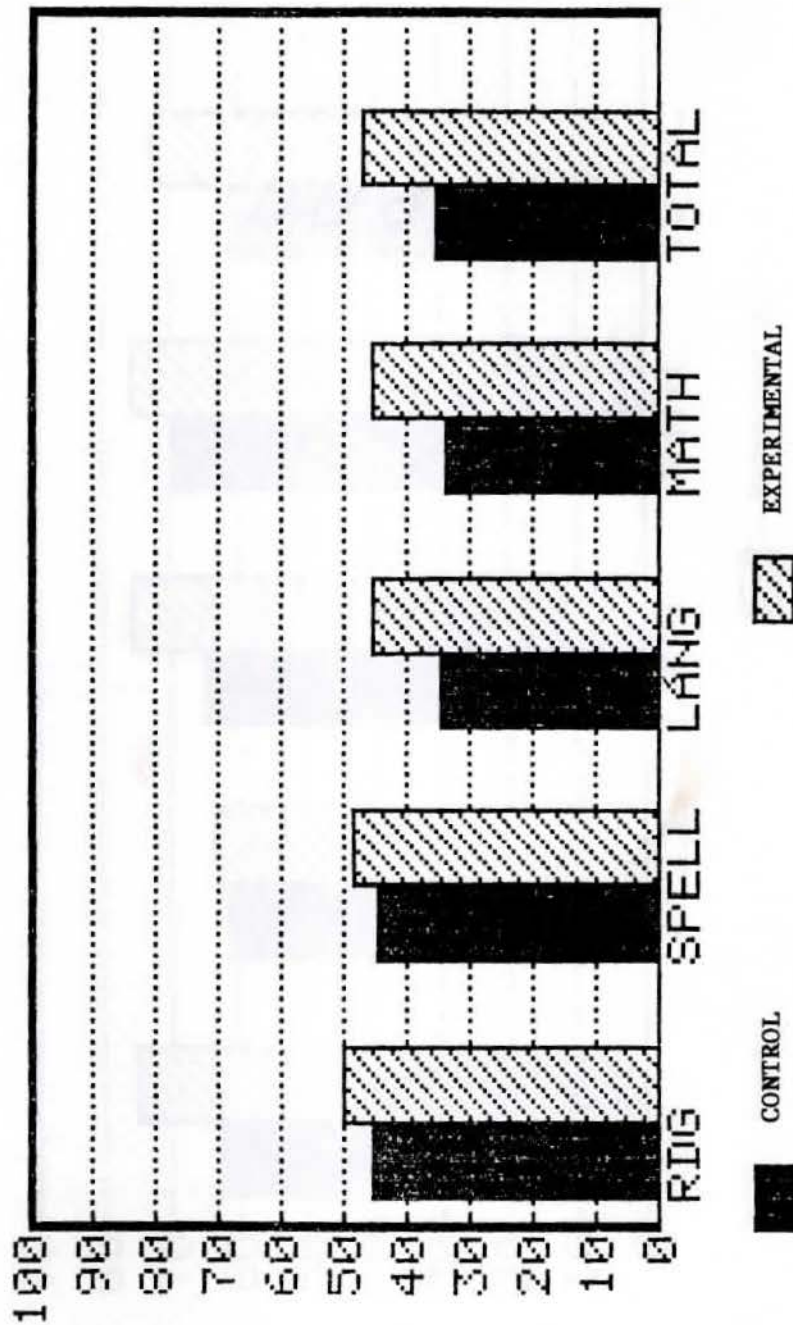
9. <u>Use every opportunity during reading instruction to improve spelling and written expression, and also insist on the best possible spoken English.</u> Reading and writing involve quite different kinds of skill and being able to spell has

nothing to do with reading. We can all read words that we cannot spell, and being able to spell a word does not help us to read it. I am not saying that other skills are not important, but that they complicate a reading task. If the aim at one particular time is to help a child become fluent in reading, expecting the child also to worry about answering questions, writing answers, and avoiding errors of spelling and of grammar is simply to overload the reading task and to make learning to read more difficult. Similarly, spoken English is largely irrelevant to reading. Children forced to worry about their pronunciation as they read aloud will not become better readers. Expecting children to read in what to them may be a completely unnatural style and manner not only confuses pedantry with instruction, but may contribute to giving a totally false idea of what reading is (Frank Smith 1983).

Appendix B

Graphics of Pre-test and Post-test CTBS scores of Control School (basal reading series) vs. Experimental School (Success in Reading and Writing).
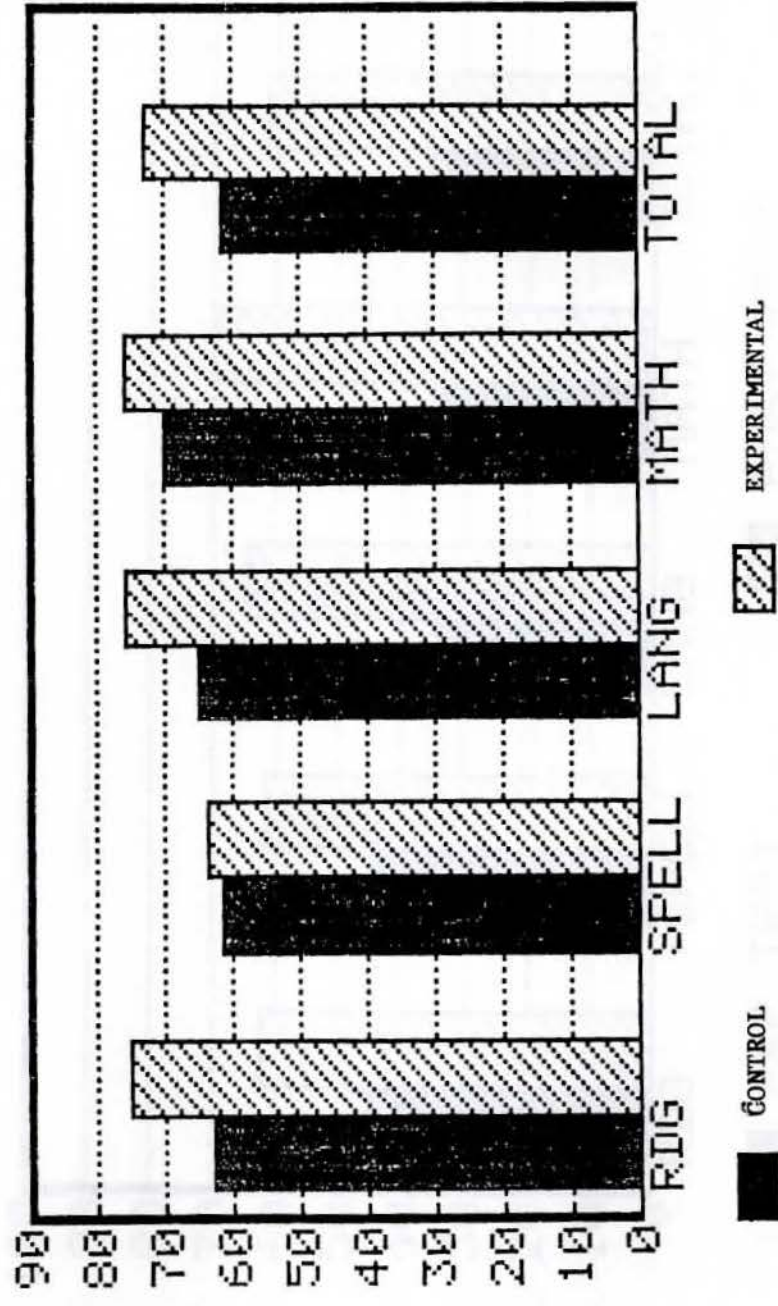
PRE TEST PERCENTILES

CONTROL   EXPERIMENTAL

	CONTROL	EXPERIMENTAL
RDG	46	50
SPELL	45	49
LANG	35	46
MATH	34	46
TOTAL	36	47

POST TEST PERCENTILES

	CONTROL	EXPERIMENTAL
RDG	63	75
SPELL	62	64
LANG	65	76
MATH	70	76
TOTAL	62	73

CONTROL GROUP

Legend: ■ PRE TEST ▨ POST TEST

	PRE-TEST	POST-TEST
RDG	46	63
SPELL	45	62
LANG	35	65
MATH	34	70
TOTAL	36	62
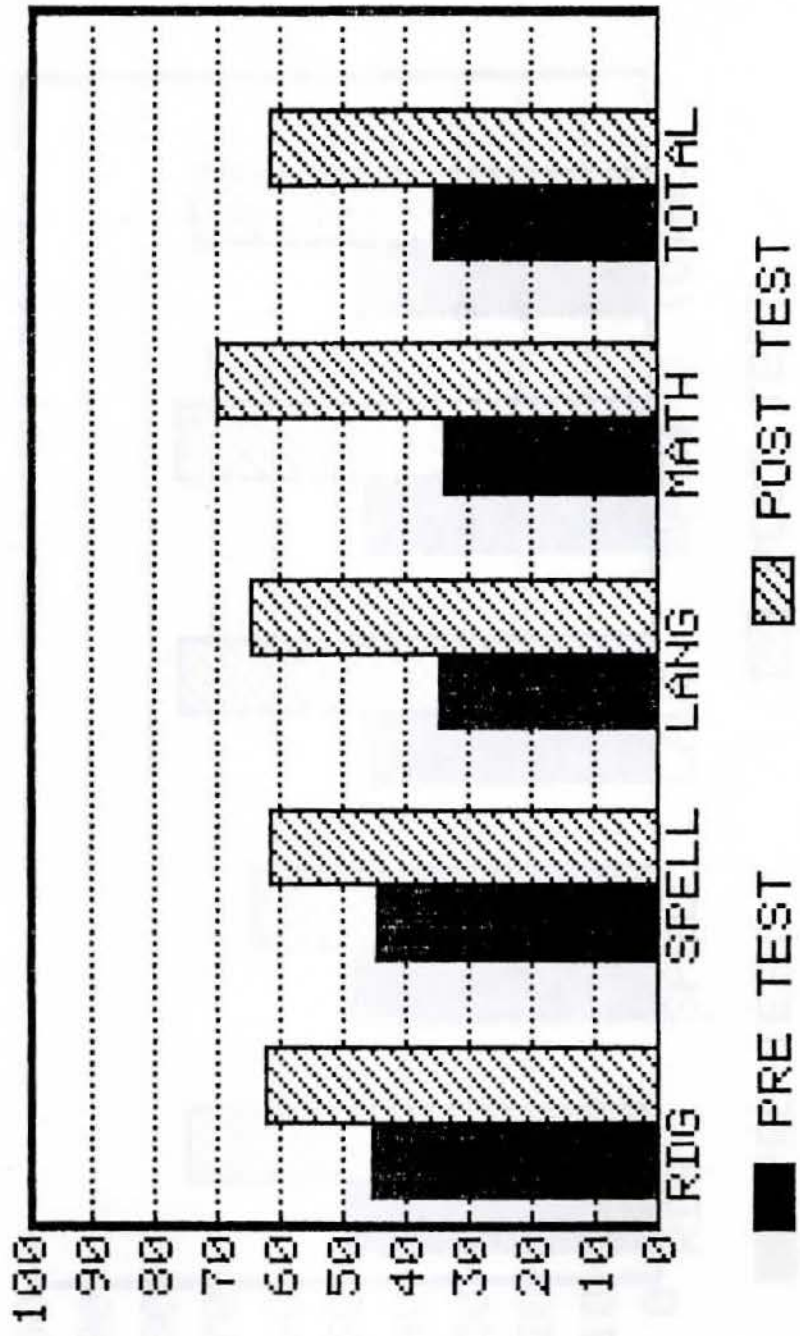
EXPERIMENTAL GROUP

■ PRE TEST ▨ POST TEST

	PRE TEST	POST TEST
RDG	50	75
SPELL	49	64
LANG	46	76
MATH	46	76
TOTAL	47	73
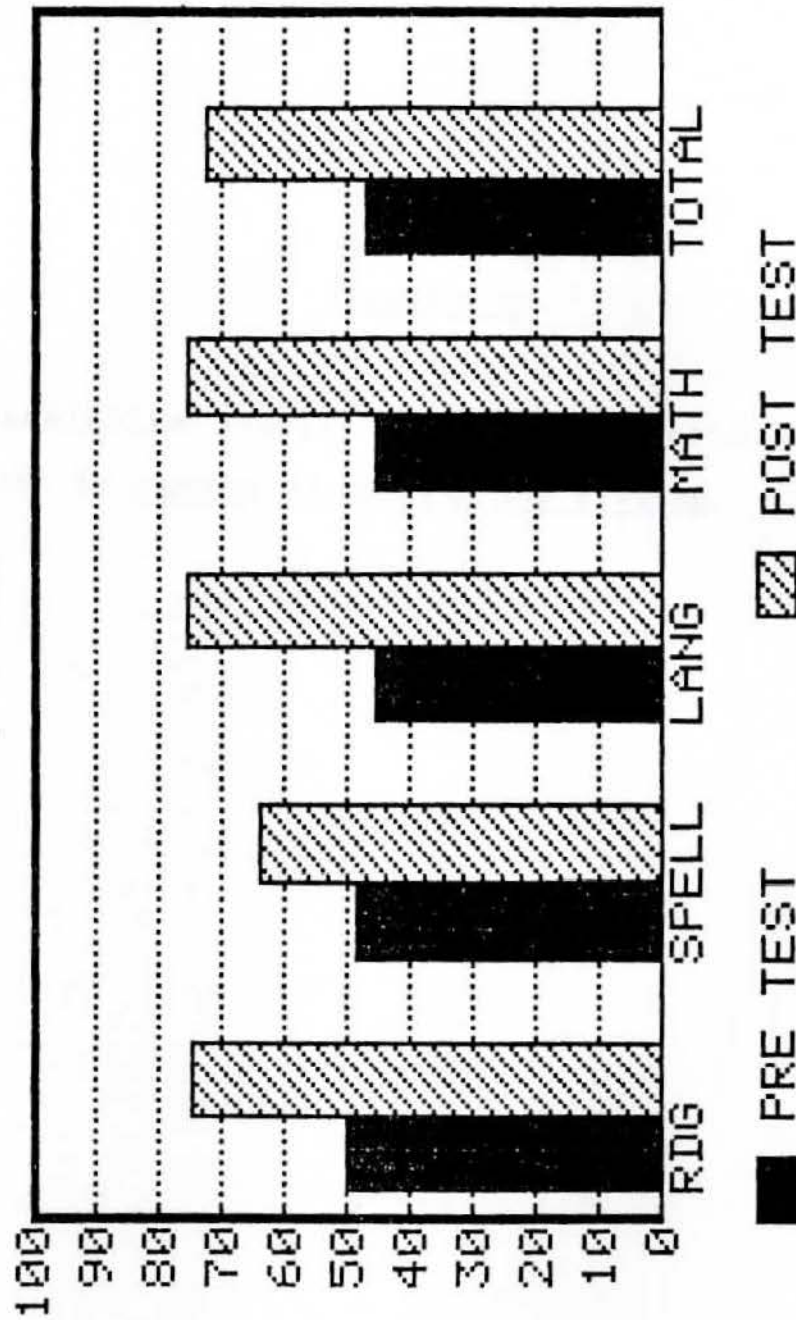
Appendix C

Representative student writing of second grade
students in <u>Success in Reading and Writing.</u>

Angie   March 7, 1983

My Trip

Last Friday I went to my great grandma's house. She lives on Uncle Bob's farm. There's lots of cows. I tried to milk a cow named Elsie but no milk came out. I even rode on her back. There's two baby cows and one baby bull. They are so cute. We took a hayride and feed cows. On the way home Mom ran over a skunk. It stunk!!!! I had lots of fun. My grandma is very sweet. I love her very much I hope we go again spon.

The End

A PAST TENSE STORY

Brian Bartlett   11-17-82

I fought my brother. He won in fighting. Then I brought him a trophy from the closet. He was already bringing me some ice cream. Then we went out and played catch. I caught the ball first. We played pirates then. He was seeking the **X**. But I sought the hidden treasure first. I said, "I think we should go in and cool off." We went into the front yard. Our mom taught us how to play badminton We teach each other how to play madeup games. Then we went to the store. Our dad was working there. He let us buy something free. Then we bought a bag full of groceries.

The King and Queen and the
Silver Bird.

Once upon a time in a
far away land there lived
a king and queen.
One nice day the queen
said," I want you to go
out and get me a silver
bird."
"Why my dear, we already
have two cats," said the king
This is why.
"I read in the newspaper
that the silver bird lays
silver and gold eggs,"
said the queen.
The other thing is only
the king and queen can
get it.
"Let's get it now," cried
the king.
They waited 6 hours
Then they finally fell
asleep.
All night long it didn't do

anything.
The next morning
they got rid of it.
Then the man that they
gave it to came over
and said," That bird laid
six silver eggs and six
gold eggs.

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