ON THE TEACHING OF READING

IN THE

PROTESTANT SCHOOLS OF QUEBEC: 1890 - 1960

An Abstract

Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree of Master of Arts

Department of Education

McGill University

by

Franga Stinson

Montreal, Quebec

May, 1963

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PREFACE

The writer wishes to express appreciation to
Professor Reginald Edwards under whose patient direction
this study was completed, and to Professor Phyllis Bowers
and Dr. Frances Crook Morrison who were encouraging and
helpful throughout. Thanks are due to teachers and pupils
of the Macdonald Elementary School, and to many others who
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impossible to name all of those who have been helpful to me,
nevertheless, their kindness is greatly appreciated.

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CHAPTER 1

THE PROBLEM

Introduction

In recent years there has been much criticism of the
teaching of reading and of the materials of instruction.
Critics have deplored the high rate of reading failure
among high school students. Others claim that there is a
lack of interest among adults and youths in good books. It
has been alleged that reading materials lack interesting
content, have been over-simplified, and are unduly
repetitious. A more insistent criticism has been that
reading problems and failures can be attributed to the lack
of phonetic training in reading instruction.

The controversy over the methods of teaching reading
probably reached its peak in 1955. It was at that time,
that Rudolph Flesch's articles, entitled, "Why Johnny Can't
Read", were syndicated in 120 American newspapers.[1] The
citizens of Salt Lake City, Utah, demanded that some
action be taken in response to the articles and, as a result,
the Salt Lake Tribune published lessons in reading, daily,
so that parents could help to improve the reading standard

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[1] Life, October 31, 1955.

of their children. It was admitted that the reading
ability of Utah's pupils was not as it should be, but there
was no conclusive evidence as to which method would
produce the most satisfactory results.

The controversy was not confined to the United States.
In the same year, The Gazette (Montreal) ran a series of
articles, written by Flesch, advocating a phonetic approach
to the teaching of reading.[2] Accompanying these articles
were statements by officers of both Roman Catholic and
Protestant school boards expressing their reactions to
Flesch's point of view, and upholding the methods that were
current in the schools at that time. Much public interest
was expressed by parents in letters to the editor. Some
parents thought that the schools were failing the pupils;[3]
other parents upheld the opinions expressed by the
educators.[4] The pressure of public criticism compelled
teachers to examine their aims and procedures, and to
justify their methods. While the furor over phonics has
subsided in the press, research continues in this important

[2] The Gazette (Montreal), October 3, 1955 - October 15, 1955.

[3] Letter to the Editor, The Gazette (Montreal), October 15, 1955.

[4] Letter to the Editor, The Gazette (Montreal), October 8, 1955.

field, as is attested in the bibliography of a recent
issue of The Reading Teacher,[5] and new light has been
expressed on the subject in the latest publication of the
National Society for the Study of Education.[6]

Statement of the problem

The controversy over the materials of instruction,
and the methods of teaching reading led to the present
study, for, it is only through careful assessment of past
and present materials and methods that a judicious
appraisal of our present approach to reading can be made.
It was the aim of the present study to examine the trends
in primary reading materials, used in the Protestant
schools of Qüebec since 1890, with respect to
(1) vocabularly, (2) readability, (3) the uses of
illustration, and (4) the nature of the literary content.
An attempt was made to determine to what extent the
materials were suited to the pupils who used them, and how
the reading texts in use at any given time reflected the

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[5] The Reading Teacher, Chicago: The International
Reading Association, 15:49, September 1961.

[6] Development in and Through Reading, The Sixtieth
Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of
Education, Part I, Chicago: The University of Chicago
Press, 1961, pp. 40 - 42, 98 - 99.

research in the field of reading materials at that time.
A second aim was to examine the changes that had occurred
in the methods of teaching reading, and the extent to
which the methods used in Quebec had followed trends in
the United States.

Delimitation of the problem

The study covers a period of seventy years, from
1890 to 1960. The date of 1890 is purely arbitrary, but
seemed justifiable, for it was about that time that the
educational system, as we know it today, emerged. The
Educational Act of 1875 provided the cornerstone for the
present organization of Protestant Education. The
legislation states in part:

> Everything which, within the scope of the
> functions of the Council of Public
> Instruction respects especially the schools,
> and public instruction generally, of Roman
> Catholics, shall be within the exclusive
> jurisdiction of the Roman Catholic Committee of
> such Council. In the same manner, everything
> which, within the scope of such functions respects
> especially the schools and public instruction gener-
> ally of Protestants, shall be within the exclusive
> jurisdiction of the Protestant Committee.[7]

At the time of the passing of the Act, there was no
definite school organization as we know it today with

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[7] W.P.Percival, Across the Years. Montreal: Gazette
Printing Company Limited, 1946, p.24.

planned courses of study, outlines of methods of instruction, or specified text books. Only gradually did an educational system emerge with good schools, trained teachers, satisfactory inspection and definite educational aims.[8]

In 1881, the first Educational Record, an official journal of the Department of Education, through which the policies of the Protestant Committee were communicated to teachers, was published; two years later in 1883, the first Course of Study was printed. While the titles of readers were not specifically listed in the Course of Study, it was possible to ascertain from the Educational Record of 1884,[9] and subsequent editions, which readers had been authorized by the Department of Education. The year 1890 seems to be close to the date at which a consistent pattern in the use of reading texts emerged.

In the current study it has been necessary to discover which readers had been used since 1890, and which methods of reading had been employed. From the Quebec Educational Record, the Memoranda to Teachers (now known as the Handbook to Teachers), and from the Courses of Study,

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[8] Ibid., p. 25.

[9] Educational Record, Quebec: The Department of Education, 4:16, January - December, 1884.

it has been learned that several series of texts were in use from 1890 to 1960. Five series of readers, Canadian Readers,[10] Royal Crown Readers,[11] Imperial Readers,[12] Elson-Gray Basic Readers,[13] and the Curriculum Foundation Series,[14] believed to be representative samples of readers used during the seventy-year period, are examined in this study.

The amassing of this small collection of readers presented great difficulty. No complete set of a series was available at any one source. A search was made in several old schools in Montreal, including Royal Arthur, Victoria, Lorne, and Riverside; unfortunately, recent fire regulations had caused principals to dispose of old texts that were not in use. A request for old readers was made through The Bulletin,[15] and the Eastern Township

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[10] Canadian Readers: Educational Series. Toronto: W.J. Gage and Company Limited, 1881.

[11] Royal Crown Readers. Toronto: Thomas Nelson and Sons, Ltd., 1926.

[12] Imperial Reader. Montreal: Renouf Publishing Company (n.d.).

[13] Elson-Gray Basic Reader. Toronto: W.J. Gage and Company Limited, 1930.

[14] Curriculum Foundation Series. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1956.

[15] The Institute of Education of McGill University, Montreal. The Bulletin, April, 1961.

Advertiser.[16] The Brome County Museum yielded the Primers

of the Canadian Educational Series; the other books in

the series came from a collection belonging to

Dr. Frances Crook Morrison. The other readers were gleaned

from a variety of sources. The limitation of texts

available determined the sample.

Only the Primers and Books I to III within each

series have been examined, for these readers provided the

material on which initial instruction in reading was based.

Subjective and objective analyses of the readers

have been made. The suitability of the literary content,

and of the illustration for the pupils who used them, has

been made subjectively; an objective analysis to determine

the difficulty of the readers includes a word count and

the application of a readability formula.

Little written evidence was available on the methods

of teaching reading in the province during the years under

consideration. Although the writer examined all available

copies of the Educational Record, the annual reports to

the Superintendent of Education,[17] and books on Quebec

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[16] Eastern Township Advertiser, (Knowlton, Quebec),
July 20, 1961.

[17] Quebec (Province). Department of Education.
Annual Reports. 1949 - 1960.

education, such as, Life in School,[18] and Across the Years,[19] little material was found. It was, therefore, necessary to obtain information about earlier reading practices through discussions with inspectors and former teachers.

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[18] W.P. Percival, Life in School. Montreal: The Herald Press, 1940.

[19] W.P. Percival, Across the Years. Montreal: Gazette Printing Company Limited, 1946.

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CHAPTER II

METHODS OF TEACHING READING

Before one can consider the particular methods in vogue in Quebec over the past seventy years, it has seemed profitable to describe the major methods that have been used to teach reading: these methods have been classified by Inglis[1] as the alphabetic, the phonic, the word, and the sentence method. The first two, according to Gray,[2] antedated all others, and were based on the assumption that reading could be taught by building words from the smaller elements of letters and their sounds. The second two, the word and sentence methods, placed initial emphasis on the meaning of what was read, and are based on the assumption that meaningful language units should be the point of departure.

The term "phonics" usually refers to a method of teaching reading. "Phonetic" is the science of speech sounds. These terms are often used interchangeably in

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[1] W.B.Inglis, "The Early Stages of Reading: A Review of Recent Investigations," Studies in Reading, Vol. I, The Scottish Council for Research in Education. London: University of London Press, 1948. p. 61.

[2] William S.Gray, The Teaching of Reading and Writing. Paris: UNESCO, 1956, p. 77.

educational discussions. Gray and Vernon use the term "phonic" as applied to method; Anderson and Dearborn[3] use the term "phonetic". In this paper, the word phonic will be used, except in quotations. The term phonetic analysis, as used in this paper, refers to identifying sounds in words in left to right progression either vocally or subvocally until the whole word has been pronounced.

The alphabetic method

The oldest method of teaching reading, the alphabetic method, dates back to the early days of Greece and Rome[4] and survived in some countries until the beginning of the twentieth century. It was introduced into the United States during the colonial period when the colonists imported English texts and patterned their instruction upon the methods used in contemporary England.[5] The alphabetic method persisted in England until about 1910,[6] and it is quite likely that it continued

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[3] Irving H. Anderson and Walter F. Dearborn, The Psychology of Teaching Reading. New York: The Ronald Press Company, 1952, p. 207.

[4] Gray, op cit., p. 77.

[5] Nila B. Smith, American Reading Instruction. New York: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1934, p. 31.

[6] Inglis, op. cit., p. 61.

to flourish in the United States until approximately the same date, even though reaction against it began in 1840[7] with the introduction of the word method and new materials.

During the period when the alphabetic method flourished in the United States some American texts were printed. Many of these reading texts were known as X apellers. The American Spelling Book, often referred to as the Blue-Back Speller, was published by Noah Webster. It is estimated that this speller reached a circulation of twenty-four million copies in the century following 1783.[8] Smith describes, in part, the book in the following paragraph.

> The bulk of the book was made up of lists of words and syllables, 74 pages out of 158 being devoted to this type of content. Rules for correct reading and speaking occupied a total of 39 pages, and moralistic advice and admonitions occupied 29 pages. There were 4 pages of fables, 4 pages of realistic stories, 2 pages of dialogues, and half a page of poetry. The excerpts below give a glimpse of the nature of the moralistic material which constituted most of the actual reading content of Noah Webster's speller.
>
> 'Be a good child; mind your book; love your school; strive to learn.
> Tell no tales; call no ill names; you must not lie, nor swear, nor cheat, nor steal.
> Play not with bad boys.
> Play no tricks on those that sit next to you; for

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[7] Smith, op. cit., 98.

[8] Ibid., p. 45.

if you do, good boys will shun you as they would a dog they knew would bite them.'[9]

Judged by today's standards, this text would be considered extremely difficult for a beginning reader.

The alphabetic method was based on the assumption that independence and accuracy in word recognition evolves with the mastery of elements such as, letters and syllables which can be combined to produce words. The first stage in the method was the mastery of the names of the letters of the alphabet. This was followed by the memorization of two-letter combinations, such as, ab, ib, and ob. These combinations were pronounced and spelled until thoroughly known, after which, a pupil moved on to larger combinations of letters, forming syllables, nonsense units, or words. Mastery was gained through constant repetition and reading was begun only after great emphasis on the recognition of words had been ensured.[10]

The alphabetic method of teaching reading had many weaknesses. First, according to Anderson and Dearborn, the assumption is false, that by knowing letters one can pronounce words, since letter names do not indicate pronunciation.

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9 Ibid., p. 48.

10 Gray, op. cit., p. 77.

> "C-a-t" is not the way the child has heard cats
> designated "on the hoof." He has heard them called
> "cat," and "cat" is what he must hear if he is to
> know what the word is. . . . [11]

Secondly, learning was difficult for the young child because of the highly specialized and formal approach-- the content of the primers being far removed from a child's interest and speech vocabularly.[12] Thirdly, the emphasis on word recognition precluded the consideration that reading can be pursued for pleasure or for seeking information. In fact, the difficulty of learning by this method was likely to discourage any further interest in reading.[13]

The phonic method

In the United States, the phonic method was introduced by Rebecca Pollard in 1889. Smith, quoting from Pollard's Synthetic Method, A Complete Manual, explains Pollard's point of view:

> Make reading of the first importance. As in music,
> let there be scales to practice; drills in
> articulation; a thorough preparation for reading
> before the simplest sentence is attempted.

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[11] Anderson and Dearborn, op. cit., p. 204.

[12] Inglis, op. cit., p. 61.

[13] Gray, op. cit., p. 78.

Instead of teaching the word as a whole and after-
wards subjecting it to phonic analysis, is it not
infinitely better to take the sounds of the letters
for our starting point, and with these sounds lay a
foundation firm and broad, upon which we can build
whole families of words for instant recognition? . . .

There must be no guess work; no reference to
pictures; no waiting for a story from the teacher
to develop thought. If the instructions of the
Manual are carefully followed (in inflection as well
as in pronunciation), the child's own voice will
give him a perfect understanding of what he reads.[14]

The Pollard method was not devoid of interest.
The sounds of the letters were not taught in isolation,
but were related to the experiences of children.[15] For
example, the teacher would recount the activities of two
children to illustrate the sound of the letter "p". Again,
a quotation from Smith to show the procedure followed.

. . . the two children saw a steamboat in the
distance and heard it making a puffing sound like
pî p! p! After hearing this part of the story, the
pupil was told that he might draw p and a
steamboat on the board, and was given this further
instruction: "You may puff as you draw the curve
to the right at the top, and think that the
steamboat is coming nearer as you make the letters
larger, as P! P! P![16]

Other systems of teaching reading which relied

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[14] Rebecca S. Pollard, Pollard's Synthetic Method,
A Complete Manual. pp. 3 - 4, cited by Smith op. cit.,p. 131.

[15] Smith, op. cit., p. 132.

[16] Loc. cit.

heavily on phonics followed, but none of them were as elaborate as the Pollard method. In general, phonic systems have stressed learning the sounds of the letters first. Usually the sounds of the vowels were learned, followed by the sounds of the consonants. Combinations of two, three or more letters were practised by sounding them out and these in turn were combined into words.[17] Anderson and Dearborn claimed that: "If the pupil pronounces the elements correctly and is able to blend them, the result is that he actually says the word."[18]

That there is great value in knowing the sounds of letters as an aid to recognizing new words would be admitted by most authorities of reading instruction. However, the limitations of the phonic method are many. First of all, consonants cannot be sounded without combination with vowels.[19] If pupils pronounce consonants separately, other sounds are added; therefore, when they attempt to pronounce consonants in words, the sounds are distorted. Secondly, the letters of the English alphabet have more than one phonetic value. For as Anderson says:

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[17] Gray, op. cit., 78.

[18] Anderson and Dearborn, op. cit., p. 208.

[19] Gray, op. cit., p. 79.

> Aside from all other questions, the phonetic
> method suffers the limitation that English does not
> hew to the line phonetically. Take these words, for
> example, all of which contain essentially the same
> vowel sound, but in which the sound is represented
> by different signs: met, sweat, any, said, says, and
> jeopardy. Or to take the opposite case, here is a
> list of words in which the sign remains the same
> but the sounds differ: sour, pour, would, tour,
> sought, and couple. What is the sound of
> "ou"? . . .[20]

Moreover, the concentration required to reproduce words

orally through attacking individual letters interferes

with grasping the meaning of what is being read. This

lack of understanding, due to such emphasis on decipher-

ing words, was recognized years ago. Gray refers to

Dunville in this matter, who said:

> In the early stages of the phonic method, when
> practically every word has to be deciphered, the
> attention of the child is so occupied with this
> process that little, if any reading (in the sense
> of comprehension) can occur.[21]

For this reason, the method is often referred to as

"word-calling". Again, as was noted in the alphabetic

method, the formal learning procedures, and the dull

material of primers often discourages interest in reading.

Writers of primary materials have not always been

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[20] Anderson and Dearborn, op. cit., p. 209.

[21] Benjamin Dunville, "The Methods of Teaching
Reading in the Early Stages," School World, 14:410,
cited by Gray, op. cit., p. 79.

careful to provide for the item of interest. Some
of the books to be had for primary children are
particularly lacking in this element. Of those
purporting to be interesting, many are based only
upon shallow, superficial interests. In their
earnest desire to have beginning children master
a particular phonic system, teachers are in grave
danger of overlooking the factor of interest.[22]

The word method

The word method was introduced by Comenius

in his Orbis Pictus in 1657. To avoid the arduous task

of learning words through spelling, he advocated that

words be presented along with pictures and thus children

would quickly grasp their meaning.[23] Horace Mann is

credited with influencing the introduction of the word

method in the United States. The period of its emphasis

is approximately 1840 - 1880.[24]

In this method, frequently referred to as

"look-and-say", words were learned at sight without

reference to the component letters or their sounds. It

was assumed that each word, having a characteristic form,

could be remembered if it were introduced in association

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[22] W.W. Thiesen, "Factors Affecting Results in
Primary Reading," Twentieth Yearbook of the National
Society for the Study of Education, Part II. Chicago:
University of Chicago Press, 1921, p. 21.

[23] Gray, op. cit., p. 84.

[24] Smith, op. cit., pp. 76-78.

with its sound and meaning.[25] Frequently, pictures in the primer accompanied the introduction of new words. As the illustrations of primers improved, the appeal of the method to children at the beginning stages of reading became apparent.[26] Rapid progress was made in learning individual words which were soon combined into sentences and stories, and children were introduced to actual reading almost from the start. After the initial procedure was established, attention was directed to the details of the words, such as the letters, their sounds and syllables. Training in using the elements of letter sounds and syllables in recognizing and pronouncing new words, led pupils to approach unfamiliar reading material independently of the teacher.

However, it is at this stage in the development of the method that the greatest limitation occurs. In Gray's opinion:

> . . . Word analysis is often delayed, or even omitted altogether, by many teachers, reliance being placed on the intuitive insight of pupils for progress in the ability to identify and master word elements.[27]

Thus pupils resort to guessing. A second limitation is

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[25] Gray, op. cit., p. 83.

[26] Ibid., p. 84.

[27] Loc. cit.

that too much reliance is placed on word form recognition,

which as Anderson and Dearborn point out is only useful

to some pupils:

> . . . word-form reading is mainly an adult habit.
> Among children, only the better readers seem to
> make much use of the word form, which may not be
> so damaging to the "look-and-say" method if it is
> true that this method encourages the reader to
> depend on the shape of the word.[28]

Vernon also points out the limitation of teaching word

recognition from the whole word entirely:

> . . . But the characteristics of whole words are
> not at all clear and obvious, and thus it is
> difficult for him to remember them apart. The
> tendency is for the child to recognize words
> partly by means of their general outline and length,
> and partly by means of characteristic letters, such
> as the first and last letters, or letters of
> peculiar shape such as 'g' and 'y'. In this way,
> he learns to recognize a few whole words at a
> glance. But sooner or later, in order to perceive
> the essential structure of words he has to learn
> the characteristics of isolated letters and the
> manner in which they are combined in different
> words. . . .
> He then has to learn that each of the letters has
> one or more associated sounds; and the sound of
> the whole word is made up of the appropriate
> letter sounds in correct order. When, and only
> when, he has achieved the total word sound, he
> will know its meaning, given by its meaning in
> speech.[29]

Again, another weakness of the method is the failure to

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[28] Anderson and Dearborn, op. cit., p. 214.

[29] M.D. Vernon, The Psychology of Perception.
Great Britain: C.Nicols and Company Ltd., 1962, p. 108.

direct the pupil's attention from left to right which is essential to accuracy in reading. According to Anderson and Dearborn:

> Good readers are attracted by the beginning of words, poor readers not so much so. Failure to notice word beginnings is a handicap to many poor readers. The "look-and-say" method of teaching is partly responsible. This method does not control the direction of eye movements. The child is left free to view the word in any manner whatsoever, and while he may still seize upon some clue by which he can recognize the word, there are some children who fail under these conditions to develop the habit of consistently viewing words from left to right.[30]

The sentence method

The sentence method made its appearance on the American scene shortly after the publication in 1897 of George Farnam's manual, entitled, The Sentence Method of Reading. This manual being unobtainable, it is necessary to quote his theory from Smith:

> The first principle to be observed in teaching reading is that things are recognized as wholes. Language follows this law. Although it is taught by an indirect process, still, in its external characteristics, it follows the law of other objects.
>
> The question arises, "What is the whole? or what is the unit of expression?" It is now quite generally conceded that we have no ideas not logically associated with others. In other words, thoughts, complete in their relations, are the

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[30] Anderson and Dearborn, op. cit., p. 231.

materials in the mind out of which the complex relations are constructed.

It being admitted that the thought is the unit of thinking, it necessarily follows that the sentence is the unit of expression . . . [31]

This method became very popular between 1908 and 1918 and many new reading series were published as a result.[32] Nursery rhymes and folk tales were in evidence in the new books, for they suited admirably the sentence method of instruction. Among other readers, published at this time, were The Progressive Road to Reading (Silver, Burdett and Company), The Horace Mann Readers (Longmans, Green and Company), and Free and Treadwell's Reading-Literature (Row, Peterson and Company). These texts later found their way into Quebec schools as supplementary readers, and have been identified as part of class libraries as late as 1960.

Essentially, the sentence method utilized the following procedure: first, the teacher would tell a story or a rhyme which the children memorized or learned well; then the sentences were read and analysed into separate words. Finally, the smaller elements of words were

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[31] George L. Farnham, The Sentence Method of Reading. p. 17, cited by Smith, op. cit. p. 140.

[32] Smith, op. cit., p. 141.

sounded.[33] Emphasis was placed on grasping the meaning of the entire passage rather than on the smaller elements and for this reason the method is often referred to as the "global" or gestalt concept of learning.

The superiority of this method over the other methods described previously is twofold; first, the emphasis is placed on meaning at the outset; secondly, practice is given in analysis which aided in independence in word recognition. However, the method had its limitations. Many of the reading selections were too difficult, which reduced reading to word calling. The selections were difficult in many ways. The sentences were long, too many new words were introduced at one time and there was too little repetition. Frequently, too little time was spent in analysis of words and word recognition skills suffered.[34]

Many studies have attempted to measure the efficiency of one method over another. The results of the most important studies published since 1900 on the effectiveness of different methods of teaching reading were summarized by Gray, in a UNESCO publication, as follows:

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[33] Ibid., p. 141.

[34] Gray, op. cit., p. 86.

On the evidence now available, it is impossible to determine which of the current methods of teaching reading is best. Each has its advantages and limitations, and no method produces the same results in all situations. The latter finding suggests that other factors affect progress in learning to read. Different methods emphasize different aspects of reading and start pupils on different roads to maturity in reading. To become an efficient reader one must sooner or later acquire maturity in all the aspects of reading. As a rule the best results are obtained by stressing both meaning and word recognition from the beginning.[35]

It must be remembered that in each of the methods referred to above, the classroom procedure for conducting reading lessons by any of the four methods described was an oral one in the primary grades. It was assumed that from the fourth grade on, pupils could read silently by virtue of their early instruction. This insistence on oral reading is mentioned by Thiesen in the Twentieth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education.

The tenacity with which primary teachers have clung to oral reading is probably due to two causes. They know of no way to bring about improvement in oral reading except through oral reading, and they have not known how to conduct silent reading exercises.[36]

It was not until about 1918 that silent reading became regular classroom procedure; this emphasis

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[35] Ibid., p. 116.

[36] Theisen, op. cit., p. 8.

continued until about 1925. The change from oral reading practice was the result of considerable research into the merits of these two aspects of reading. The writing of Parker and Huey had directed attention to reading as a thought-getting process, and this new concept of reading was, in part, responsible for the "wave of scientific investigation into reading which swept the country between 1910 and 1920."[37] Many of the scientific studies of the period between 1910 and 1920 were investigations into the various aspects of silent reading, and the preparation and administration of standardized reading tests. Investigations by Mead, Oberholtzer, Judd, Pintner and Gilliland showed the superiority of silent reading over oral. Gray summarizes the findings of these studies which show that,

> . . . silent reading is used far more widely in social life than oral reading, that it is a much more rapid process, and that it is usually accompanied by better comprehension of what is read. When the amount that is read per unit of time is considered, the advantage of silent reading is even more apparent. Because of its greater importance, economy, and efficiency, the

[37] Smith, op. cit., p. 155.

[38] William Scott Gray, "The Importance, Economy, and Efficiency of Silent Reading," Summary of Investigations Relating to Reading. Supplementary Educational Monographs, No. 28. Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago, 1925, p. 27.

development of effective habits of silent reading should be emphasized in programs of instruction.[38]

The limitations that oral reading placed on pupils is stated by Judd and Buswell in their introduction to investigations of the various purposes of silent reading:

> . . . The element which makes oral reading slow is the relatively cumbersome process of pronouncing the words. This process cannot by any possible device be speeded up so as to equal in rapidity the processes of recognition and interpretation in the highly perfected form which these reach in a mature reader. A very common result of emphasis on oral reading during the whole school training is to fasten upon the pupil the limitations which are characteristic of oral reading. Recent investigations of the laboratory have made this clear by showing that the kind of reading exhibited by adults who are inefficient readers is usually the same as the kind of reading found in the case of immature readers who are in the early oral stages.[39]

From this time on, investigations and their results have played an increasingly important part in the type of methods used; it becomes increasingly difficult to separate the investigation and the change of classroom procedure with which it was associated or seemed to facilitate. Parallel to the investigations into the various aspects of silent reading were the first attempts to measure reading ability by standardized tests as we

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[39] Charles Hubbard Judd and Guy Thomas Buswell, Silent Reading: A Study of the Various Types. Supplementary Education Monographs, No. 23. Chicago, Illinois: The University of Chicago, 1922, p. 1.

have noted. According to Gray, in the years 1914 and 1915,
two-thirds of the studies on reading were related to
testing procedures:

> By the close of 1915 scientists, administrators,
> and teachers were measuring the results of
> instruction in reading, comparing achievement in
> oral and silent reading, determining the factors
> which made for rapid progress, studying the errors
> and difficulties of individual children, and
> measuring the progress of pupils taught by
> different methods.[40]

Doubtless, the heightened interest, particularly
in silent reading led to increased interest in silent
reading practices.

Perhaps 1925 becomes a significant year. Prior
to this, as has been shown, at various periods of time one
particular method of teaching reading had been emphasized
almost to the exclusion of any other procedure. The
publication of the Twenty-fourth Yearbook, of the National
Society for the Study of Education, signalled a broader
approach to reading both in methods and the textbooks
which the methods were to utilize.[41]

This Yearbook was not the work of a committee,
but a group of school men, superintendents and others,

[40] Gray, op. cit., p. 6.

[41] Report of the National Committee on Reading.
Twenty-fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the
Study of Education, Part I. Chicago: The University of
Chicago Press, 1925.

who had decided that an authoritative statement should be made on the status of reading, methods of instruction,and urgent research which needed to be undertaken. The only previous occasion on which the society had published a yearbook, prepared by persons other than a committee of its own selection, was in 1920 when it accepted for publication a report on silent reading.

The authors of the Twenty-fourth Yearbook carefully delineated what was known about reading, what was the best opinion current, and what research needed to be done. In the years immediately preceding its publication, significant changes had taken place in the purposes and reading interests of adults. As Gray and Parson, members of the committee, on separate occasions noted the importance of reading in social life as follows:

> To keep informed concerning current events; to secure specific information of value in making plans; to learn more about events or problems of special interest; to secure the opinions of others concerning civil, social, or industrial problems; to keep in touch with business or professional developments; to secure suggestions concerning efficient methods of doing work; to determine the important items in correspondence, messages and instructions; to follow directions, to advance in one's range of information; to keep the mind stimulated with important things to think about; to develop a broad outlook on life; to secure pleasure during leisure hours; to satisfy curiosity.[42]

42 Gray, op cit., p. 9.

Other changes to be noted were the increase in the reading
of newspapers and periodicals and, the fact that while
many more people were reading than ever before, a large
section of the adult population did not read at all.
Concern over this fact was reflected in an article
reported in the Twenty-fourth Yearbook on the effect of
the schools' failure to cultivate in children reading
habits that carry over to adult life. It noted the
study of Burgess in army tests which she had applied.

> This deficiency was not caused by their never
> having learned to read. The fact is that an
> overwhelming majority of these soldiers had
> entered school, attended primary grades where
> reading is taught, and had been taught to read.
> Yet, when as adults they were examined, they were
> unable to read readily such simple material as
> that of a daily newspaper.[43]

While the amount of reading that adults did for a variety
of purposes was being subjected to analysis, the variety
of reading required by children in classroom work was
also under study.[44] The significant fact that the
above studies made clear to educators was that schools
needed to train children not only how to read, but to

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[43] May Ayres Burgess, The Measurement of Silent
Reading. p. 11, cited in Report of the National Committee
on Reading. Twenty-fourth Yearbook of the National
Society for the Study of Education, Part I. Chicago:
The University of Chicago Press, 1925, p. 3.

[44] Gray, op. cit., pp. 16 - 23.

create in them permanent interest in reading.

Two other factors which operated to bring about
a change in methods may be mentioned here: first of all,
the recent interest in the utilitarian uses of reading
called forth much discussion among teachers about the
neglect in developing appreciation for literature; and
secondly, there was an increased interest in the
relationship of child development and classroom
practices.[45] Until this time children were expected to
sit or stand for long periods while they read or listened
to others. No consideration had been given to the idea
of more active participation by the children or to their
needs and interests. Concern for the lack of participation
prompted a subsequent criticism from Dewey in the following
terms:

> The cause of the educational movement that
> emphasizes the importance of overt doing is not far
> to seek. It is primarily a reaction against the
> bad consequences of the externally enforced
> passivity characteristic of the traditional school
> with its imperative demand for quiet, silence,
> immobility, folded arms, set positions. When the
> reaction was positively supported by carrying into
> the school the results of child study, which showed
> that the young child is predominantly motor, the
> doors were thrown open to an activity program in
> the sense of emphasis of perceptible bodily
> activities, of doings and makings, of play and

[45] Smith, op. cit., p. 186.

work.[46]

The factors referred to above are, of course, reflected in the objectives stated in the Twenty-fourth Yearbook, and are in turn, reflected in textbooks published in the following years and in the methods of reading instruction. In setting out these aims the Committee suggested that:

> The primary purpose of reading in school is to extend the experience of boys and girls, to stimulate their thinking powers, and to elevate their tastes. The ultimate end of instruction in reading is to enable the reader to participate intelligently in the thought life of the world and appreciatively in its recreational activities.

This aim implied that there was a need for greater variety in the content of reading texts in order to extend experiences and to provide a background of information on which to interpret and judge further reading experiences.

The need for being interested in reading for both work and recreational purposes led to,

> A second objective of reading instruction is to develop strong motives for, and permanent interests in reading that will inspire the present and future life of the reader and provide for the wholesome use of leisure time. This includes not

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[46] John Dewey, "Comments and Criticisms by Some Educational Leaders in Our Universities," in The Activity Movement. The Thirty-third Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1934, p.82.

[47] Report of the National Committee on Reading, op. cit., p. 9.

only permanent interests in reading in a narrow sense of the term, but in addition keen interest in life, in the world and its people, a desire to keep posted concerning current events and social problems, and the habit of reading systematically for recreation and intellectual stimulation.[48]

This second aim implies a recognition that not all children will respond to the same motives; that all children will not enjoy the same texts by virtue of their various abilities. In order to foster good attitudes toward reading both in school and in life outside of school careful guidance of the work and selection of materials for poorer readers would be necessary, coupled with provision of materials richer in content and expectation of more independence for pupils of greater ability.

The third aim, while not definitive in nature, is followed by a list of the attitudes, habits and skills which are necessary in a sound reading program. The general statement was as follows:

A third aim of reading instruction, therefore, is to develop the attitudes, habits, and skills that are essential in the various types of reading activities in which children and adults should engage.[49]

The specific details of this aim are as follows:

(1) recognition of sentences as units of thought

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[48] Ibid., p. 11.

[49] Ibid., p. 12.

(2)   recognition of words and groups of words

(3)   recognition and interpretation of typographical devices.

(4)   appropriate posture while reading

(5)   habits of intelligent interpretation

(6)   effective oral interpretation

(7)   skillful use of books, libraries and sources of information.[50]

In assessing the changes which followed the publication of the Twenty-fourth Yearbook it can not be assumed that reaction to any of the influences for change in reading practice was immediate. Old methods and materials persisted in spite of new thinking, but once new readers were published it appeared that a new era in reading instruction was launched. A careful analysis of many of the new series of readers published after 1925 has been made by Smith in her excellent historical work.[51] Many of the reading texts used today, contain improvements and expansions of the merits of these early texts. A further reference to these reading books occurs in Chapter V.

In part, as a result of the work of the independent

[50] Ibid., pp. 12 - 15.

[51] Smith, op. cit., pp. 200 - 216

committee which prepared the Twentieth Yearbook of the
National Society for the Study of Education, teachers
became aware of the relation of reading to other
subjects, Thus, reading materials had been prepared
for subjects on the curriculum, without regard for the
difficulty they presented for the pupils who read them,
but now the emphasis was on collecting or writing materials
suitable for the pupils who were to study them. This
prepared the way for the changes which appeared to
follow the Twenty-fourth Yearbook, wherein, the closer
relationship of reading, not only to subjects, but to the
general activities of children in the school was
strengthened.

As a result of the aims stated in the Twenty-fourth
Yearbook, changes became evident; particularly noticeable
was the closer relationship of reading to other activities
of the school. Until actual reading in the primers began,
provision was made for a variety of experiences in which
the children were particularly active.[53] These experiences
included excursions, care of pets, dramatization of

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[52] New Materials of Instruction. The Twentieth
Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of
Education, Part I. Chicago: The University of Chicago
Press, 1921.

[53] Report of the National Committee on Reading,
op. cit., p. 37.

stories; in fact, any activities were included which
helped "to develop the language abilities which are basic
to a successful introduction to the reading process."[54]
Discussion and conversation became an integral part of
any one of the activities, which were followed by written
charts, bulletins or newspapers, dictated by the children
to the teacher. These activities were not confined to the
pre-reading and early reading stage, but continued to be
an integral part of the whole school program.

The main task of reading centered around the basic
reading texts, which contained units of stories around a
central theme. The texts now appearing made it possible
to relate the topic of reading to other subjects on the
curriculum, without the diligent search for material by
the classroom teacher, as envisaged by the Twenty-first
Yearbook. Work in art, spelling, social studies, in fact any
subject, was either subordinated to the work in the reader
or correlated with it. For this latter purpose all
subjects were considered of equal importance, a movement
initiated at an earlier date and for different reasons by
Eliot at Harvard and it was the theme, or particular
topic, around which all activities revolved. A third
aspect of method was in using reading as a tool to further

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[54] Ibid., p. 177.

the interests and activities of children. Skills in reading were developed as they were needed in connection with the children's activities. It was hoped that the interest aroused in these classroom activities would carry over to library reading and out of school life.

The varied purposes of reading were classified into two main types: (1) work type and, (2) recreatory. It was the recognition of the second type that resulted in the provision of supplementary readers in complete sets for a class, and in the provision of many class library books. These were advocated for small group or individual reading.[55]

Phonic training was not excluded, but was subordinated to the rest of the program. Instruction in phonics was delayed until interest in reading was assured, and usually until a sight vocabularly was established through the meaningful association of the spoken word with the written symbol. The place of phonics is stated as follows:

> The premature introduction of phonetic
> training and the over-systematic early work
> frequently crowd out varied activities needed for
> the all-round development of little children.
> Artificial means of holding attention must be used,
> as young children are not interested in the
> refinements of analysis. This premature emphasis
> leads to a lack of systematic work later on when
> children are capable of more intensive training.

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[55] _Ibid._, p. 199.

The second and third grades are the period in which such training should be given.[56]

Many of the recommendations for the improvement of reading made in the Twenty-fourth Yearbook, were implemented during the decade following its publication. Among the improvements noted were: increased interest in reading problems; progress in understanding "reading readiness"; provision of more interesting reading material; emphasis on the meaning of content; and recognition of individual differences. The following undesirable trends continued: emphasis on reading to the exclusion of other aspects of learning, and exclusive emphasis in some aspects of reading skill, to the neglect of others.[57] Since there was cause for further improvement the aims of the Twenty-fourth Yearbook were again reiterated in The Teaching of Reading, published by the National Society for the Study of Education in 1937. It was also suggested in this volume that an adequate reading program provided for the development of critical attitudes toward materials read, along with efficiency in word recognition and in interpretation; that provision of reading materials with

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[56] Ibid., p. 89.

[57] The Teaching of Reading: A Second Report. Thirty-sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1937, p. 7.

consideration of their readability in relation to the
pupil's ability was necessary; that guidance be given in
reading activities from the kindergarten to university
level with respect to "readiness for reading".
"'Readiness' is applied in this report to the successive
stages of development through which the individual passes
in acquiring mature reading habits."[58]

In the Yearbooks of 1925 and 1937 some
consideration was given to relating reading instruction
to individual differences. Particular emphasis was given
to this relationship, as a result of research in child
development, in Reading in the Elementary School,
published in 1949.[59] Russell explained that reading and
the developmental traits of children are related in two
ways.[60] First of all, the characteristics, needs and
activities of children at various ages should determine
what and in which manner reading should be taught.

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[58] Ibid., pp. 18 - 19.

[59] Reading in the Elementary School. Forty-eighth
Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of
Education, Part II. Chicago: The University of Chicago
Press, 1949.

[60] David Russell, "Reading and Child Development,"
in Reading in the Elementary School. The Forty-eighth
Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of
Education, Part II. Chicago: The University of Chicago
Press, 1949, p. 10.

Secondly, reading activities influence personality

development by improving interests, and through the

degrees of success or failure that children experience.

This is in sharp contrast to older methods, which imposed

the same materials and the same approach on all children.

Russell explained the more recent point of view in the

following statement:

> The modern point of view arising out of the child
> study movement sees reading not as a set of skills
> but as a part of the well-rounded development of
> children and adults. It is a means to greater
> knowledge of a topic, more understanding of one's
> own and other's behaviour, and better adjustment
> to social situations rather than a program for
> producing rhythmic eye-movements or accurate word
> recognition. This does not mean that reading
> skills are of no consequence. Rather, it implies
> that, because the emphasis in the reading program
> is not upon isolated skills but upon reading
> purposes and needs, the skills and habits acquired
> will be more efficient and more functional. In
> addition, it means that reading abilities may
> contribute to some of the more subtle aspects of
> personality development in a way they never would
> in a program emphasizing only the mechanics of
> reading.[61]

As recently as 1961, in _Development in and Through_

Reading, Russell re-emphasized the concept that reading

activities must be systematic and introduced gradually to

coincide with the growth pattern of the individual.[62]

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[61] _Ibid._, p. 11.

[62] David Russell, "Continuity in the Reading
Program," in _Development in and Through_ Reading. The
Sixtieth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study
of Education, Part I. Chicago: The University of
Chicago Press, 1961, p. 226.

The continuity in reading growth must depend upon: (1) provision of graded materials for instruction, (2) administrative arrangements to meet individual or small-group learning situations, and (3) continuous measurement of growth in reading skills and comprehension. And in addition to the above considerations, Witty, in the same publication, expressed the view that reading should not be dealt with as a single subject, but be closely related to the other language arts: listening, writing and speaking.[63]

Methods have swung from one extreme to another. There have been periods of all oral reading or all silent; all phonics or no phonics; but since the 1920's, having accepted the concepts that reading serves many purposes and that individuals vary in their ability to acquire reading skills, methods must of necessity be more comprehensive. No single device, or single method will provide all the skills needed for efficient reading; nor will any single approach reach all children who are learning to read. Which then is the best way to teach reading?

At a conference in New York, in 1961, the leading experts met under the chairmanship of Conant. Their statement

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[63] Paul A. Witty, "Purpose and Scope of the Yearbook," in Development in and Through Reading. The Sixtieth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961, p. 2.

prepared for public consumption stated tritely that there
were two aspects to reading: "(1) recognition of the
printed word on the page; and (2) understanding and
dealing with meaning in the passage."[64] Each one of these
acts performed in reading is a highly complex process for
beginners. Since reading is an important aspect of
individual development, modern reading programs are
designed to provide for optimum success at all grade
levels.

It is known that when children enter school they
differ widely in maturity and attainments, and any progress
in reading will be dependent upon these aspects of growth.
Since the school's responsibility is to provide initial
success in a child's first reading experiences, an
understanding of his "readiness" for reading is essential.
The factors involved in readiness for reading have been
stated by the Scottish Council for Research in Education
as follows:

> It is obvious that the child at birth is not ready
> to learn to read. Before he can begin this
> enterprise he must have sufficient visual acuity to
> recognize slight differences in the complicated
> pattern of words. He must have sufficient auditory
> discrimination to tell one complex sound from
> another. He must have a sense of orientation both

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[64] Learning to Read. A Report of a Conference of
Reading Experts. New Jersey: Educational Testing Service,
1962, p. 4.

in vision and hearing before he can appreciate the
meaningful structure of words seen and heard. The
child who is to learn the art of reading must have
some ability in speech, for reading in its early
stages consists normally in matching the visual
form of a word with its known meaning through speech.
Defective speech, whether due to prolonged baby talk
or due to neural or muscular defect, retards reading
attainment. The growth of intelligence is related
to reading readiness. Children who are seriously
retarded in intelligence are incapable of reading
efficiently. The normal child, as he matures,
enlarges his experience of the world and extends
his vocabulary and powers of oral expression. A
steady emotional development is also related to
reading readiness.[65]

Through observation and formal testing procedures, schools

determine what weaknesses children have and efforts are

made to overcome any possible conditions that may impede

reading instruction. A variety of activities are provided

in the pre-reading stage to improve vocabularly and speech,

to lessen tensions, to ease social relationships, and to

develop visual and auditory acuity.

Once readiness for reading has been established,

the first stage in learning to read is the perception of

words; this involves the identification of the printed

symbol, its sound and its meaning, and instant recognition

of the word through additional contacts. Some reading

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[65] Scottish Council for Research in Education.
Studies in Reading, Vol. II. London: University of
London Press Ltd., 1949, p. 69.

authorities such as Flesch,[66] and Hay and Wingo[67]
emphasize a single phonic approach to word recognition;
other writers including Gates,[68] Russell[69] and Durrell[70]
recommend a combined approach. The combined approach
provides a child with a wide variety of techniques,
including phonetic analysis, that can be applied to any
word that requires recognition.

The second stage in reading is comprehension of the
author's meaning. The completeness of comprehension that
is required is determined by the purpose for which the
reading is done. The development of proficiency in
comprehension requires guidance and practice in a wide
variety of skills. Beyond the understanding of the
author's meaning it is essential that a pupil interprets,
evaluates, and rejects or assimilates the ideas that

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[66] Rudolph Flesch, Why Johnny Can't Read. New York:
Harper and Brothers, 1955.

[67] Julie Hay and C.E. Wingo, Teacher's Manual for
Reading with Phonics, rev. ed., Chicago: J.P. Lippincott
Company, 1954.

[68] A.I. Gates, The Improvement of Reading, 3rd.ed.
New York: The MacMillan Company, 1947.

[69] David Russell, Children Learn to Read, 2nd. ed.
Boston: Ginn and Company, 1961.

[70] Donald D. Durrell, Improving Reading Instruction.
New York: Harcourt, Brace and World, Inc., 1956.

reading conveys; for it is through the integration of ideas gained through reading with past experience that new attitudes and interests are acquired.

The four major methods of teaching reading have been described and their limitations noted. Methods in vogue before 1900, stressed the importance of word recognition, and determined accuracy through oral reading. Gradually, a broader concept of reading emerged. Social changes demanded reading for wider purposes, and research provided evidence of the efficiency of silent reading; these development resulted in a modification of reading practice. Today, the efficient reader must not only recognize words, but grasp meanings, and critically evaluate the wide variety of reading material that modern life provides.

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CHAPTER III

READING INSTRUCTION IN QUEBEC

As early as 1881 in Quebec schools, all learning
activities centered about the reading book, and a pupil's
progress was evaluated in terms of the reading mastery that
he had attained. He was "in the Fourth Reader" as
contrasted with today's assessment of being in the fourth
Grade.[1] The reading text book at present in the reading
program per se, and in relation to the curriculum as a
whole, remains as a core around which many other activities
revolve. This is particularly true in the primary grades.[2]

In the past, reading programs have served three
purposes:[3] One purpose for teaching reading was to ensure
a literate population, and to this end pupils were drilled
until they had mastered the mechanics of reading. A second
purpose was to develop elecutionary ability, and emphasis
was placed on oral reading and recitation of selections
from the readers. A third purpose was to encourage

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[1] C. Wayne Hall, "Teaching With Town in 1881,"
Educational Record. 67:31, January-March, 1951.

[2] Willis L. Uhl, "The Materials of Reading," The
Teaching of Reading. The Thirty-sixth Yearbook of the
National Society for the Study of Education, Part I.
Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1937, p. 207.

[3] Loc. cit.

appreciation of literary selections, and to foster interest in reading classical works. To this end, children were introduced to nursery rhymes, fables, and folk-tales in the primers.

The content of early readers was selected to serve the purposes of the reading program. The materials of instruction satisfied the needs of society and to some extent satisfied the needs of the teacher. The preface of the readers contained instructions to the teacher in methodology, and many texts contained exercises for furthering skills in related language areas. Today, the reading program is much broader in scope than it was at the turn of the century. The aim is manifold, requiring not only mastery of the mechanics of reading, but development of thoughtful and critical attitudes toward reading, and providing for greater depth and scope in reading. To meet these broader aims, the reading materials have become more diversified in both quantity and quality.

Readers used between 1890 and 1930, were no doubt, selected in terms of what was considered, at that time, suitable to the children's needs. However, a subjective examination of the texts will show that the material was unsuitable both in language structure and interest to the abilities and maturity of the children. Phonic

primers were filled with lists of meaningless words, and the stories lacked sequence. Other readers contained didactic selections which were entirely unrelated to the interests of the pupils.

It is difficult to know on what basis the texts were selected, but several assumptions can be made. No doubt the availability of material from publishers limited the selection. From 1890 to 1910 there were only two main publishing houses in Canada in the textbook field, (W.J. Gage and Company Limited and Copp-Clark Company Limited), and as a result, texts were imported, many from Scotland.[4] Secondly, heavy reliance was placed on the judgment of the publishers as to the suitability of textbook material. It can also be assumed that teachers and school authorities selected texts on no better criteria than personal opinions.

One can now turn to the problem of the methods in use in Quebec. In attempting to establish which methods have been used in Quebec since 1890, one finds that no one method has persisted to the exclusion of others. The tendency of methods to overlap was due to several influences. Textbooks influenced methods; and even when

[4] Information received in a letter, dated, July 26, 1961, from Mr. Frank Strowbridge, Textbook Manager, W.J. Gage and Company Limited, Toronto.

new and improved texts were authorized, outmoded ones
continued to be used. Schools were not urged to change
texts, if the change meant undue financial burden to
parents.[5] Until comparatively recent years, schools
bought supplies of texts directly from publishers to sell
to their pupils. Books were handed down in families and
sold second-hand among pupils as long as they were in
usuable condition; and as long as schools had supplies on
hand, they sold the books even though good judgment termed
them obsolete. Reading texts that were in use throughout
the province from 1890 to 1960 are listed in Appendix A.
The dates suggest the peak periods of use rather than the
dates of authorization.

The introduction of new reading materials was no
guarantee that new methods would accompany them. Teachers
often continued to use outdated methods because of timidity
or lack of knowledge to attempt anything new. Prior to
1927, little, if any, instruction was given to students
at normal school. According to an informant, early in the
Twenties student teachers received one lecture in
reading methods, given by the lecturer in geography and

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[5] W.P. Percival, Life in School, Montreal: The
Herald Press, 1940, pp. 79-80.

history.[6] It was not until Miss Violet B. Ramsay joined the staff of the School for Teachers in 1927, that instruction began in basic primary methods.

At the turn of the century, it can be assumed that the phonic, the alphabetic, and the word method were used. It was at this time that the Canadian Readers were in use in the Eastern Townships. These materials were designed for instruction by any of the above methods. There is further evidence that several methods prevailed at this time. After inspecting the schools of the province in 1902, John Adams summarized his observations of reading methods in his report.

> Many teachers follow the blunt old alphabet method. Others loudly prefer the phonic or phonetic method, and all the while really teach by what is known as "look-and-say".[7]

There is an indication in Adam's statement that some teachers were quite unsure of the nature of the methods which they employed. Whichever method was used, the reading lessons were conducted orally. The Course of Study of 1883, and subsequent issues, directed teachers to work toward, "pleasantness and brightness of tone,

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[6] Information received from Professor Phyllis Bowers of the Institute of Education.

[7] John Adams, The Protestant School System in the Province of Quebec. Montreal: E.M. Renouf Publishing Company, 1902, p. 92.

clearness and correctness of pronunciation." No doubt

through diligence, the task was accomplished, for Adams made

the following appraisal of classroom work.

> Perhaps the reading as a rule is too low to be
> easily heard, but this is a less serious defect
> than the school drawl from which the schools of
> this province are remarkably free.[8]

Daily practice in oral reading was essential in the

initial stages of reading to correct the pronunciation

of the elements of words, and the recognition of whole

words; it was not intended as a mode of interpretation.

It was also conceived that oral reading improved further

growth in ability to read, for according to Adams, "the

purpose of practice in reading aloud is to secure ability

to read to oneself."[9]

In addition to reading aloud, pupils recited

selections of prose and poetry from the reader. The

importance of this part of the work from the reader was

emphasized in the Educational Record of 1898 in the

following statement:

> If your pupils have not memorized some good
> selections of literature this year, get at it at
> once. No matter what grade you may be teaching,
> you should be ashamed to confess negligence in

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[8] Adams, op. cit., p. 93.

[9] Loc. cit.

this particular.[10]

"Seat work" or "busy work" is not an innovation of the modern classroom. Following most of the selections in the readers were lengthy exercises including spelling, writing, grammar, and questions based on the literary content. As well as the work outlined in the reader, young children were expected to mark familiar words in newspapers and magazines. "Seat work" was to have "a purpose beyond merely keeping the child busy."[11]

In 1907, the Department of Education issued to teachers a manual which included suggestions for conducting reading lessons. It was recommended that teachers adopt the phonic method of reading.[12] As was suggested in the past, emphasis was to be placed on the cultivation of pleasant tone, fluent expression, and distinct pronunciation in reading aloud. As well as reading orally from the text, pupils were expected to read aloud from supplementary readers. This was to be done without previous preparation, and was proposed as a way to

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[10] Educational Record. Quebec: The Department of Education, 18:232, October, 1898.

[11] Educational Record. Quebec: The Department of Education, 26:73, January-December, 1906.

[12] Manual Respecting the Course of Study in the Protestant Elementary Schools of the Province of Quebec. Quebec: Department of Education, 1907, pp. 22-24.

maintain interest and to cultivate a love for good literature. At the same time it was suggested that the unfamiliar words of the reading text form the basis for spelling lessons, and that the two subjects be taught simultaneously.

Further instructions to teachers, issued a decade later, have been located. In 1915, it was suggested that a satisfactory way of approaching reading was through a combination of the phonic, word, and sentence methods. The letter sounds were to be taught in order of their appearance in the text, and introduced through a simple story technique. The illustration from the memoranda follows:

> . . . For instance, in teaching the sound "s" begin by telling a story of two children going through a wood and meeting a snake which hissed and said "s". Ask the children to repeat this sound till they can do so directly. Then write the letter on the board, saying, "Now watch the chalk say "s". Then write it again and again in white and coloured chalks, and in big and little letters, till the idea of its shape is fixed. Then ask them to trace the letter with their fingers in the air and allow some pupils to write it in chalk on the board. . . . [13]

As a further aid, teachers were referred to a Manual on Primary Reading, a source of techniques and a specimen

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[13] Memoranda of Instructions for Teachers. Quebec: Department of Public Instruction, 1915, p. 24.

lessons; this manual was to be procured from the Department of Education, Toronto.

At this time, oral reading was placed in a new perspective. It was intended that those who listened should appreciate the selections read, and not merely follow along attentively in the reader. To ensure a high standard of fluency for presentation of a selection to the class, word meanings and pronunciation were to be made clear in advance, and the passage was to be read silently to ensure comprehension,[14] The measure to which these suggestions were implemented is doubtful.

Oral reading persisted through the Twenties, when the function of a reader was considered as a means of mastering the mechanics of reading through drill; if the content of the reader interested the pupil as well, this was considered an added advantage. This emphasis on oral reading persisted into the Thirties even after the introduction of new texts; these texts, including the Reading and Thinking readers, were not intended for drill purposes. The content of the readers was to be studied as good examples of literary form, and to inspire a love for

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[14] Loc. cit.

reading.[15] However, no simple reader or primer was included in the series; Book One was intended to be read after pupils had actually learned to read through the usual drill procedures. The primers of the older phonic readers (Royal Crown Phonic Primers, introduced about 1909) provided for initial instruction in reading, and as a result the emphasis on oral reading persisted. The attitude toward silent reading and its place in the reading program was expressed in the Educational Record (1930) as follows:

> . . . even in Grade 2 the child should take some interest in selections and read for himself -- also he should do some silent reading from Grade 2 up.[16]

In contrast to the former attitude of the function of oral reading, in a modern reading program, oral reading of a selection is intended to assist the child to recognize the plot, action, and conversation of a story as a unified whole: even at the pre-primer stage when single words are introduced, children are trained to read the word silently first.

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[15] "The Change in Readers," Educational Record. Quebec: The Department of Education, 4:80-81, April-June, 1930.

[16] E.C.W., "Memoranda on the Reading and Thinking Books," Educational Record. Quebec: The Department of Education, 4:205, October-December, 1930.

While the phonic primers provided a basis for initial instruction, over a long period of time, from about 1910 to 1935, teachers were urged to prepare additional graded materials for oral drills. The material was to consist of cards for practising the sounds of letters and phonograms; the work was to continue through to Grade three. A list of instructions entitled, The Mechanics of Reading,[17] was sent out to teachers in 1913, and reference is made to the same directive in the Course of Study of 1931, and in subsequent course outlines, thus indicating the importance attached to this feature of the reading program.

During the period of 1930-1945, it can be assumed that more variety in teaching methods existed than at any time, either before or since that date. There were three main reasons for this diversity. First, instructions in the methods of teaching reading were given at the School for Teachers at Macdonald College; thus, the beginning teacher would have a clearer understanding of the purposes and practices of reading instruction than previous graduates of the teacher training college. Secondly, several new

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[17] "The Mechanics of Reading," Educational Record. Quebec: The Department of Education, 33:35-36, January, 1913

texts were authorized which, by nature of their content, implied different approaches to reading. Thirdly, the enterprise or activity program, originating in the schools of Dewey and Parker,[18] was affecting classroom practice in Quebec schools.

Three significant contributions to improve the current reading methods were advocated to teachers in training. First, there was the recognition of the importance of stimulating interest in reading before formal instruction began. It was suggested that children be encouraged to discuss freely class-room observations and activities, and events in their daily lives; the simple comments of the pupils were to be recorded by the teacher for the class to see. This was an attempt to bridge the gap between the spoken word and the printed symbol. These written recordings were confined to a few words or a simple sentence, and were the forerunners of the experience charts as we know them today. Secondly, when the work in the reader began, the words were presented as wholes in association with pictures, or in verbal context. Phonics were taught in moderation, and introduced gradually as the teacher witnessed the need for

[18] Nila B. Smith, American Reading Instruction. New York: Silver, Burdett and Company, 1934, p. 230.

this form of training when children struggled to decipher words on their own. Thirdly, emphasis was placed on reading the story silently to secure meaning; pupils were directed to read to find answers to questions -- today this is known as "guided silent reading".

Four new series of readers were introduced during the Thirties, the Highroads to Reading, the Treasury Readers, the Reading and Thinking, and the Elson-Gray Basic Readers. Two series, the Royal Crown Readers, and the Imperial Readers, introduced earlier, were still in use at this time. Schools were permitted to use one complete series, or a combination of series; thus, a variety of patterns emerged in both materials and methods.

The Imperial Readers could be used throughout the primary grades; these readers were based on the sentence method. The Elson-Gray Basic Readers could also be used for the first three grades. However, it must be noted that the complete series was not available until 1941. With the introduction of the Elson-Gray Basic Readers, (1934) an interesting pattern of methods emerged. Since these readers minimized the teaching of phonics in the early stages of reading, some teachers tended to neglect this aspect of reading; some teachers swung completely to the look-and-say method; and some continued the former phonic procedures, sub rosa, believing that phonics were in

disgrace.

Three series of readers, the Highroads to Reading, the Treasury Readers, and the Reading and Thinking, were only intended for use from Grade two upwards, which meant that some provision had to be made for instruction in Grade one. Either the Royal Crown Phonic Primers or the Elson-Gray Basic Readers could serve this purpose. Whichever combination of readers was used, there was no gradation of difficulty in vocabulary or literary content from one series to the other. According to one informant,[19] some teachers attempted to bridge the gap of difficulty by preparing their own reading stories; these stories were based on the interests of the children, and the vocabulary was carefully selected from the Thorndike Word List.

The third influence on reading methods was the Enterprise or Activity Program. As a general rule, regular instruction in the basic reader continued, but further incentive to read was expected to develop when pupils searched for information for various aspects of the enterprise.[20] Frequently, in the primary grades, the

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[19] Information received from Miss M. Clarke of Elizabeth Ballantyne School, Montreal.

[20] Robert Japp, "English in the Enterprise Program," Educational Record. Quebec: The Department of Education, 12:pp.11-12, January, 1941.

themes of the enterprise developed from pupil interest in units of the reader.[21] In addition to the usual texts and supplementary readers, other types of reading material became available for classroom use, including magazines, newspapers, and books borrowed from homes and libraries. The more interesting materials, and the less formal classroom activities encouraged pupils to read independently and with a purpose. Oral reading served an important function, as children read to communicate information, gained through independent reading to the class.

Diversity in method was the practice of the Thirties; conformity in instruction had its beginning in the Forties. This was due to the introduction of the Curriculum Foundation Series of readers, (1944) and the guidebooks which accompany the texts. The revised edition was authorized in 1956, and this series is used throughout the province, with teachers adapting the materials to suit the needs of their pupils. Detailed procedures for developing fundamental attitudes, skills, and habits, essential for effective oral and silent reading, are given in the guidebooks. The aims of the basic program in

[21] V.B. Ramsay, "Experiments in Enterprise Work," Educational Record. Quebec: The Department of Education, 12:211, September, 1941.

reading, upon which the materials are based, are outlined

by William S. Gray in the foreword to the Handbook to

Reading.

> Our aim is not merely to help children master the
> mechanics of reading. We believe it essential to
> cultivate in children from the very beginning a
> thoughtful attitude toward reading, and skill in
> grasping the meaning of what is read -- so that
> reading will contribute richly to children's
> personal growth. Guided by this broad conception
> of reading, we shall need --
>
> . . . to develop in children the attitudes that
> make a good reader -- a consistent demand for
> meaning; a thoughtful, inquiring attitude toward
> everything read; interest in reading as a source
> of pleasure and information.
>
> . . . to develop fundamental understandings of
> language, and the basic word-perception and
> interpretation abilities needed for all reading.
>
> . . . to provide materials and guidance that meet
> children's personal and social needs, build
> character, and contribute to growth through
> reading.
>
> . . . to acquaint children with their literary
> heritage, mold tastes, and promote love of good
> literature.
>
> . . . to provide leads to wide personal reading
> on his own for every child.[22]

The development of favourable attitudes toward reading

is initiated in the kindergarten by: (1) the provision of

a classroom atmosphere conducive to mental, physical,

social and emotional growth and, (2) the introduction of a

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[22] Handbook to Reading. Chicago: Scott, Foresman
and Company, 1956.

readiness program based on the appraisal of individual differences. The readiness program is intended to foster interest in reading, and to develop language, motor, visual, auditory, and interpretive skills which are important to success in reading. Readiness books, prepared by the publishers, are part of the pre-reading program, but there seems to be some doubt, at present, about the effectiveness of these materials.[23] As a result, some teachers plan their own approach to reading readiness through language and writing activities. To ensure that favourable attitudes toward reading continue throughout the grades, frequent appraisals of reading abilities are made, and subsequent adjustments of methods and materials are made to suit the child.

The modern reading program, as pointed out by Gray, is concerned with thoughtful interpretation or critical evaluation of the author's work; this interpretation is dependent upon the acquisition of a large number of related skills. These skills are presently classified as word recognition skills and, comprehension skills. Word recognition, contrary to recent public opinion, is not

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[23] Donald D. Durrell and Alice K. Nicholson, "Preschool and Kindergarten Experience," in Development in and Through Reading. Sixtieth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961, pp.267-268.

developed by look-and-say entirely, but by a variety of techniques and procedures which permit a pupil to decipher words on his own. The comprehension skills are varied and numerous, and emphasis is placed on understanding from the earliest reading stage; further guidance and practice in these skills is given through related reading materials.

Formerly, oral reading was used to test the accuracy of word recognition, to encourage appreciation of literature, and to give further practice in reading when no material, other than the basic text, was available. Today, manuals suggest many purposeful uses for oral reading; in the beginning stages it is used as an instructional and diagnostic instrument; later, it is used for the communication of ideas, and as a fine art in the presentation of selections of poetry and literature. While primary children can be taught by non-oral methods, the extent to which oral reading is used varies among teachers. There is still much evidence of purposeless "oral reading around the room" from both basal texts and supplementary readers.

We probably can assume that the uniformity of method in teaching reading throughout the province is due to the teacher training program, the authorization of specific reading texts, and the supervision of classroom management. The eclectic trend in method, an attempt to

overcome the limitations of specialized methods, is recommended to teachers in training; this approach to reading is clearly and fully delineated in the manuals advocated for use. Beginning teachers put heavy reliance on the manuals to guide them in teaching. In-service training programs, work-shops, and summer schools held within the province, tend to reinforce the current methods by providing or suggesting available professional literature and teaching aids.

The Handbook for Teachers, (1957) issued by the Department of Education, suggests adaptation of the Course of Study to meet the abilities of individual pupils. The usual tendency is toward a fairly narrow interpretation of instructions, mainly because the teachers are unsure of their prerogative -- since each teacher is subject to inspection by officials of the Department of Education.

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CHAPTER IV

READABILITY

Formerly, the standard method of evaluation of
textbooks was entirely subjective. It was the failure
on the part of experts to select suitable reading materials
which gave rise to the search for more objective methods
of evaluation. We turn now to newer methods of evaluating
readers, which have developed as the result of the
capricious and unreliable nature of former methods. Two
techniques for determining the difficulty of readers, in
general use today, are word analysis and the application
of readability formulas.

Readability depends on the interaction of many
factors, and can, in fact, have several meanings. A
comprehensive definition of readability has been
suggested by Lorge.

> What a person understands of the material he
> reads depends upon his general reading ability and
> the readability of the text he is reading. His
> reading ability, moreover, depends upon his
> intelligence, education, environment, and interest
> and purpose in reading. The readability of a text
> depends upon the kind and number of ideas it
> expresses, upon the vocabulary and its style, and
> upon format and typography.[1]

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[1] Irving Lorge, "Predicting Readability," Research
in the Three R's. New York: Harper and Brothers, p. 184.

Since words are the units of which reading
materials are constructed, it can be assumed that the
words of a reader determine to a certain extent the
measure of difficulty or readability of the text. Interest
in the selection of words as determinants of readability
led to studies of the vocabulary burden of texts, to the
development of word lists, and to the preparation of
readability measures using vocabulary burden as the single
or most important criterion.

One of the earliest studies of readability was
published by Lively and Pressey in 1923 and was based on
the single factor of vocabulary burden. Gray outlined
their procedure as,

> . . . an objective method of determining the
> vocabulary burden of a book by comparing the words
> in a thousand-word sampling with the words in the
> Thorndike word list. The index number for each
> word developed by Thorndike was used as a measure
> of difficulty and was the basis for computing the
> weighted median index number for the passage.[2]

Patty and Painter[3] modified the above method since the
length of a book adds an additional measure of difficulty.
Their modification was achieved by taking sentence

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[2] William S. Gray, "Progress in the Study of
Readability" The Elementary School Journal, 47:492,
May, 1947.

[3] W.W. Patty and W.I. Painter," A Technique for
measuring the Vocabulary Burden of Textbooks," Journal
of Educational Research, 24:129, September, 1931.

samples throughout a text, proportionate to its length.
While Dolch[4] proposed that interest, understanding and
ease of reading were elements highly dependent upon each
other in the reading process, he singled out vocabulary
burden as the main determinant of reading difficulty. His
readability formula was the ratio of different words to
running words within a given textbook. The ease of
administering the above objective methods of readability
is easily recognized. Gray reaffirms the opinion of
Elliott as to the advantages of these techniques as
follows:

> . . . they yield more consistent results than do
> some of the more complicated techniques of
> estimating readability. They provide little or no
> insight, however, concerning the elements other
> than vocabulary, that influence readability.[5]

Another line of investigation in the field of
readability resulted in formulas for predicting reading
difficulty based on various language structures; the
assumption being that factors other than vocabulary
burden may contribute to the difficulty of the text. One
of the earliest measures for predicting readability was
The Winnetka Formula, prepared by Vogel and Washburne in

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[4] Edward Dolch, "Vocabulary Burden," *Journal of
Educational Research*, 7:170, March 1928.

[5] Gray, *op. cit.*, p. 493.

1928.[6] A large sample of pupils from a variety of schools was given the paragraph meaning section of the Stanford Achievement Test. These pupils then submitted the names of books which they had read during the year. From these titles a list of 700 books, highly recommended by the pupils, was prepared; the median reading grade score, on the Stanford Achievement Test, of the children who liked each book was taken to be the grade to which the book belonged. The graded book list which resulted led to analysis of the elements that differentiated the books from the lowest to highest levels of difficulty. Ten factors, including vocabulary and other language structures such as phrases and kinds of sentences, were found to be highly related to reading difficulty and to each other. A combination of four factors was selected as being the most important. These factors were:

    (1) the number of different words within a thousand-word sample

    (2) the number of prepositions in a thousand-word sample, including duplicates

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[6] Mabel Vogel and Carleton Washburne, "An Objective Method of Determining Grade Placement of Children's Reading Material," Elementary School Journal, 28:373-381, January, 1928.

(3)　the number of words not on the Thorndike list[7]

(4)　The number of simple sentences from a sample of seventy-five sentences

Each of the foregoing measures was correlated with the reading grades of children who read the books. A formula or multiple regression equation was developed, so that when each of these four factors is estimated from a sample from a text, and given a certain weight, the grade level of the book is estimated. The estimation or predicted grade level of each book meant that it could be read by a child who had received an equivalent rating on the <u>Stanford</u> <u>Achievement</u> <u>Tests</u>.

The above study was based on texts from the Grade three to Grade nine level. The formula was revised in 1938 to include books at the Grade one and Grade two level, with modification in the factors of prepositional phrases and vocabulary.[8] Since the pioneer study of Vogel and Washburne, many other formulas have been devised, using different criteria and variables. The two variables most

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[7] Edward L. Thorndike, <u>The</u> <u>Teacher's</u> <u>Word</u> <u>Book</u>. New York: Teachers College, Columbia University, 1921.

[8] Carleton Washburne and Mabel Vogel Morphett, "Grade Placement of Children's Books," <u>Elementary</u> <u>School</u> <u>Journal</u>, 38:344-52, January, 1938.

commonly used in predicting readability are:

(1) vocabulary load and, (2) sentence structure. Among
the well-known formulas are those of Flesch,[9] Lorge,[10]
and Dale-Chall.[11]

The original Flesch formula (1943) was revised in
1948 because of its shortcomings; the basic structure of
the formula and the difficulty of its application. The
revised formula consists of two parts: the first measures
"reading ease" and uses the elements of average sentence
length in words, and average word length in syllables;
the second measures "human interest" of a given passage and
uses the elements of personal words and sentences.
Personal words include: (1) all first-, second-, and
third-person pronouns except the neuter pronouns it, its,
itself, and they, them, their, theirs, themselves if
referring to things rather than people and, (2) all words
that have masculine or feminine natural gender, e.g.
Jones, Mary, father, iceman and actress. Personal

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[9] Rudolf Flesch, "A New Readability Yardstick"
Journal of Applied Psychology, 32:221-223, June, 1948.

[10] Irving Lorge, The Lorge Formula for Estimating
Difficulty of Reading Materials. New York: Bureau of
Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1959.

[11] Edgar Dale and Jeanne Chall, "Formula for
Predicting Readability." Research in the Three R's.
New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958, pp. 194-205.

sentences include: (1) spoken sentences, marked by quotation marks, (2) questions, commands, requests and other sentences directly addressed to the reader, (3) exclamations and, (4) grammatically incomplete sentences whose full meaning has to be inferred from the context (e.g. Doesn't know a word of English.) The two parts of the formula are:

Formula A (for predicting "reading ease"):
$RE = 206.835 - .846wl - 1.015sl$

Formula B (for predicting "human interest"):
$HI = 3.635pw + .314ps$[12]

Of his criterion Flesch states:

The criterion used in the original formula was McCall-Crabb's Standard Test Lessons in Reading. The formula was so constructed that it predicted the average grade level of a child who could answer correctly three-quarters of the test questions asked about a given passage. Its multiple correlation coefficient was $R = .74$. It was partly based on statistical findings established in an earlier study by Lorge.

For many obvious reasons, the grade level of children answering test questions is not the best criterion for general readability. Data about the ease and interests with which adults will read selected passages would be far better. But such data were not available at the time the first formula was developed and they are still unavailable today. So McCall-Crabb's Standard Test Lessons are still the best and most extensive criterion that can be found; therefore, they were used again for the revision.[13]

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[12] Flesch, op. cit., p. 225.

[13] Ibid., pp. 222-223.

The Lorge formula for predicting readability was based also on the comprehension of paragraphs from the McCall-Crabb Standard Test Lessons in Reading by school children. Comprehension was judged on the answers to questions about the paragraphs which dealt with such items as: specific details, general import, appreciation, knowledge of vocabulary, and understanding of concepts. The formula uses average sentence length, uncommon words, and prepositional phrases as predictors of readability.

The Dale-Chall formula used as the criterion the same sample passages from the McCall Crabb Standard Test Lessons in Reading as did Flesch and Lorge, However, the formula was based on the language elements of uncommon words (those words outside of the Dale List of 3,000 words),[14] and sentence length.

The formulas of Flesch, Lorge, and Dale-Chall predict the readability of materials beginning at the Grade four level. Spache[15] devised a formula useful at the primary grade level.

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[14] Dale list of 3,000 Familiar Words in "A Formula for Predicting Readability," Research in the Three R's. New York: Harper and Brothers, 1958, pp. 206-212.

[15] George Spache, "A New Readability Formula for Primary Reading Materials, "Elementary School Journal, 53:410-413, March, 1953.

The Spache formula is:

> Grade level of text = .141 average sentence length
> per 100 words + .086 percent of words outside the
> Dale 769 Easy Word List + .839.

Of his readability formula, Spache reports:

> We have followed the example of Dale and Chall in
> choosing average sentence length as a predictive
> measure.   In addition, we employ the Dale List of
> 769 words. The two other elements which, by reason
> of the evidence of Lorge, Flesch, or Dale-Chall,
> might have been employed, were the number of
> affixes and the Dale 3,000 word list. In our opinion,
> the primary reading material makes both of these
> measures inappropriate.[16]

The criterion of the Spache formula differed from the

criterion mentioned in the Flesch, Lorge, and Dale-Chall

formulas. From 152 books in common use in the first three

grades 224 samples of 100 words were secured. These texts

included basic readers and some health, science, and social

studies books. Each book was assigned a grade level

according to the level of its classroom use.

> The multiple correlation coefficient obtained by
> combining sentence length and percent of hard words
> to predict grade level of texts is R = .818. The
> accuracy with which these two elements predict
> reading difficulty of primary texts compares very
> favorably with the Dale-Chall multiple coefficient
> of .70 or that of .7074 in the Flesch Formula for
> "reading ease".[17]

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[16] George Spache, "A Readability Formula for
Primary Grades," Research in the Three R's. New York:
Harper and Brothers, 1958, p. 178.

The improvement of primary reading books was due
not only to the gradual introduction of new words, but
also to the careful selection of words by authors and
editors from prepared word lists. In general, word lists
are made on the basis of the frequency in which words
appear in the following: (1) written materials for adults
and children, (2) the writings of children, (3) the
spoken vocabulary of children and, (4) various combinations
of the above. The Thorndike and Lorge[18] list is a
revision and extension of one of the earliest word lists
which was first published by Thorndike in 1921 and revised
a second time in 1931. The latest edition includes the
frequency rating of words as they occur in reading material
for adults and children, and indicates the grade level
at which these words should be included in texts for
children.

The Gates list,[19] a further refinement of the
original pattern, includes words selected from many

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[18] Edward L. Thorndike and Irving Lorge, The
Teacher's Word Book of 30,000 Words. New York: Teachers
College, Columbia University, 1944.

[19] Arthur I. Gates, A Reading Vocabulary for the
Primary Grades. New York: Teachers College, Columbia
University, 1935.

sources such as the following: (1) the Thorndike list,
(2) children's literature, (3) a series of primary readers
and, (4) from the speech vocabulary of young children.
A total of 5,600 words was selected from the various sources
and these words were judged by experts according to the
interest and utility that they had for children. In
addition to these judgments, the words were rated on the
relative frequency of occurrence in primary literature
and in children's spoken language. On the basis of these
criteria, the words were arranged in order of merit, and
1,881 words were selected from the original list for
inclusion in A Reading Vocabulary for the Primary Grades.
According to Russell,[20] it is probably the best source
for checking the suitability of words that appear in
primary reading books. Among the well-known restricted
word lists are those of Stone,[21] Dolch[22] and Dale;[23] the
words of these lists are considered a core vocabulary for

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[20] David Russell, Children Learn to Read. Boston:
Ginn and Company, 1949, p. 192.

[21] Clarence R. Stone, "Most Important One Hundred
and Fifty Words for Beginning Reading," Educational Method,
28:192-195, October-May, 1939.

[22] E.W. Dolch, "A Basic Sight Vocabulary," The
Elementary School Journal, 36:456-460, February, 1936.

[23] "Dale List of 769 Easy Words," in The Lorge
Formula or Estimating the Difficulty of Reading Materials.
New York: Bureau of Publications, Teachers College,
Columbia University, 1959.

primary reading. It is the Dale list of 769 words that is used in this study in the calculation of the Spache readability formula.

Standardized word lists used as a check against the vocabulary of texts will measure the difficulty of vocabulary burden, but do not indicate the conceptual difficulties of words in either the idiomatic or figurative sense; neither is a readability formula sensitive to the various meanings of words. The reader's background and interest in the subject matter and content, as well as the structure of the language elements, will determine his comprehension of the author's meaning. It would, therefore, seem important that the subject matter of reading texts be closely related to the interests and experiences of the children who use them. While the reading interests of young children reflect the times in which they live, investigations of their interests reveal that generations of children have liked essentially the same themes. Dunn[24] reported that there was no evidence to believe that primary children preferred

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[24] Fannie W. Dunn, "Interest Factors in Primary Reading Material," cited by William Scott Gray in Summary of Investigations Relating to Reading. Supplementary Educational Monographs. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1925, pp. 167-168.

folk tales or legends exclusively, which seemed to be the predominant selections of readers at the time of her study, but that children enjoyed a wide range of topics. Boys clearly indicated interest in animal stories; girls preferred stories of children's activities, familiar experience and repetition of familiar phrases which occur in some of the old folk tale favourites, such as, the "The Three Little Pigs" and, "The Billy-Goats Gruff"; all children enjoyed an underlying quality of surprise or unexpectedness in either prose or poetry, fact or fiction. The large proportion of poetry included in textbooks was not warranted on the basis of children's preferences. During the same year, Uhl[25] reported a study of the interest elements of reading selections that involved pupils in Grades one to seven. Selections with dramatic action and adventure were enjoyed throughout all of the grades. Animal stories, interesting repetition, and selections suitable for dramatization were preferred in Grade one, decreasing somewhat in favour by Grade three. However, stories of familiar experiences and fairy tales were chosen significantly more often at the upper level

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[25] Willis L. Uhl, "Scientific Determination of the Content of the Elementary School Course in Reading," cited by Gray, op. cit., p. 168.

of the primary grades. Other investigators in the field,
Witty, Coomer, and McBean[26] reached similar conclusions.

Interest in a book is further enhanced by the
quality and quantity of illustration. Today, reading
textbooks for primary children are striking in the amount
of colourful illustrations that they contain. They
contrast sharply with the textbooks of the first quarter
of the century which contained little, if any, coloured
illustrations, and certainly less of black and white
pictures. While colourful illustrations appeal to teachers
and pupils, two questions arise as to their value. First
of all, the quality and quantity of illustrations add to
the cost of textbooks and, therefore, each illustration
should merit its place in the text as a useful education-
al aid. Secondly, some consideration should be given to
the preferences that children have with respect to the
quality of illustration, for as Uhl suggests,

> . . . Results secured in Canadian and English
> schools with the most drab reading materials offer
> prima facie evidence that the pictorial equipment
> in American readers is determined more by the
> competition of publishers than by known educational

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[26] Paul Witty, Ann Coomer and Dilla McBean,
"Children's Choices of Favourite Books: A Study Conducted
in Ten Elementary Schools," Journal of Educational
Psychology, 37:266-278, May, 1946.

requirements . . . . [27]

The interest that illustrations have for children was the subject of a number of studies. Miller[28] studied the preferences for illustrations of one hundred children in the first three grades. Photographs were selected on the basis of content, including the following classifications:

(1) children in action

(2) children and pets

(3) children and toys

(4) adult activities

(5) animals

Five photographs were selected from each classification, and each was copied in the following ways:

(1) as a line drawing

(2) as a wash drawing

(3) as a black and white illustration

(4) as an illustration with red predominant

(5) as an illustration with blue predominant

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[27] Willis L. Uhl, "The Materials of Reading," The Teaching of Reading. The Thirty-sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1937, p. 236.

[28] William A. Miller, "The Picture Choices of Primary Grade Children," Elementary School Journal, 37:273-282, December, 1936.

(6) as a full colour illustration (three primary
colours)

It was concluded that children preferred full colour
illustration; the second choice was for red, followed by
blue as predominating colours. Wash, line, and black and
white drawings were seldom chosen. Children of higher
intelligence preferred full colour, while those of lower
intelligence preferred photographs.

Malter[29] analysed eight available preference studies
dating from 1922 - 1936, with illustrations differing
markedly with respect of both subject matter and colour.
He noted that children generally preferred coloured
pictures to black and white and that they also preferred
pictures that had story-telling qualities. Rudisill[30] also
found that children preferred coloured pictures to
uncoloured ones if they were identical in other details.
However, the realism of the picture rated more than any
other factor. An uncoloured life-like picture was preferred
to a coloured one if the colour tended to lessen the
realistic qualities of the picture.

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[29] Morton S. Malter, "Children's Preferences for
Illustrative Materials," Journal of Education Research,
41:378-385, January, 1948.

[30] Mabel Rudisill, "Children's Preferences for
Colour Versus Other Qualities in Illustrations,"
Elementary School Journal, 52:444-451, April, 1952.

It may well be that full-colour illustrations are not as necessary as teachers have grown to believe, but that children would be satisfied with a variety of illustrations, including some black and white realistic pictures and some coloured ones; this arrangement would most probably lend variety to the format and would, no doubt, reduce the cost of publication.

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CHAPTER V

ANALYSES OF FIVE SERIES OF READERS

Of the research methods now current, word count and readability formula techniques have been applied to texts under review.

Word analysis

A word analysis was made of the Primers and Books I and II of the Canadian Readers, the Royal Crown Readers, and the Imperial Readers. The total occurrences of each word have been tabulated. The more recently published texts, the Elson-Gray Basic Readers, and the Curriculum Foundation Series, contained word lists; the publishers provided the other relevant data, namely, the total number of running words, and the minimum number of repetitions. Therefore, the total number of occurrences for each individual word was not tabulated for these readers.

Words from poetry selections were included in the count, only when the poetry appeared with prose selections as part of the material for reading instruction. Poetry appearing in a separate section of a reader, and included for literary appreciation, was not included in the word count. Words from phonic exercises were included, when

they were associated with reading lessons. Titles of
illustrations, and words in glossaries and language
exercises were excluded.

Plural nouns ending in 's' and possessive forms were
counted with their singular forms. Parts of verbs, with
the exceptions of an 's' ending, were tabulated
separately. Words with two or more meanings, or with
two or more grammatical categories (blow, that) were
not listed separately. Nouns which are used as proper
names were not distinguished from the common form
(Bill, bill).

The results of the analyses are given in Tables I
to V. The successive columns show:

    (i)   the total number of words in each book

   (ii)   the total number of different words

  (iii)   the total number of words not repeated

   (iv)   the total number of words repeated

    (v)   the average number of repetitions of each
          word

Table I which follows contains the word count
analysis of the Canadian Readers, published in 1881, and
used in Quebec from about 1890 - 1910.

TABLE I

WORD COUNT OF CANADIAN READERS: EDUCATIONAL SERIES

Readers	Total Words	Different Words	Words Not Repeated	Words Repeated	Average Repetitions
First Primer	1,312	366	193	173	6.4
Second Primer	4,233	928	470	458	8.2
Book Two	16,470	2,110	943	1,167	13.3

The word count of the Royal Crown Readers, used in Quebec from approximately 1910 - 1930, is given below in Table II.

TABLE II

WORD COUNT OF ROYAL CROWN READERS

Readers	Total Words	Different Words	Words Not Repeated	Words Repeated	Average Repetitions
Primer Part I	3,576	531	220	311	10.7
Primer Part II	7,359	1,236	517	719	9.5
Book One	13,449	1,677	709	968	13.1
Book Two	18,180	2,085	855	1,230	14.0

The Imperial Readers, introduced in Quebec about 1919, had no primer. The word count of the first two readers of the series appears in Table III.

TABLE III

WORD COUNT OF IMPERIAL READERS

Readers	Total Words	Different Words	Words Not Repeated	Words Repeated	Average Repetitions
Book One	7,792	630	161	469	16.2
Book Two	10,932	1,480	545	935	11.1

The word count analysis of the Elson-Gray Readers follows in Table IV.

TABLE IV

WORD COUNT OF ELSON-GRAY READERS

Readers	Total Words	Different Words	Words Not Repeated	Minimum Repetitions
Primer	18,416	220	0	24
Book One		502	0	
Book Two	22,545	973	0	25

In the word count of the <u>Curriculum</u> <u>Foundation</u> <u>Series,</u> the two readers for Grade two have been classified together. The Primers and Book One have been treated separately; thus, they can be compared more readily with the first books of other series.

TABLE V

WORD COUNT OF CURRICULUM FOUNDATION SERIES

Readers	Total Words	Different Words	Words Not Repeated	Minimum Repetitions
Primers	7,500	158	0	12
Book One	10,797	493	0	10
Book Two	43,089	1,037	0	10

It can be noted, in Tables I to V, that several trends are apparent in the vocabulary of readers used from 1890 - 1960. First, there has been an increase in the total words in the readers at each level of instruction. Secondly, considerably fewer different words have been introduced in readers published since 1930 (<u>Elson-Gray</u> <u>Basic</u> <u>Readers</u> and the <u>Curriculum</u> <u>Foundation</u> <u>Series</u>). It has been noted, in Chapter IV, that the number of different words in proportion to the number of total words largely determines the difficulty of a book; thus more

recent readers are much easier in this respect. Thirdly,
earlier readers contained a large number of words
appearing only once; today all words are repeated a
minimum number of times, and words introduced in one text
are carried over into the next book. In both the Canadian
Readers and the Royal Crown Readers, there is a larger
number of average repetitions in the more advanced texts,
than in the first primers. Fourthly, in the first three
series, the number of words not repeated is a rather high
proportion of the different words of the text. The number
of repetitions required by an average pupil for mastery of
a word seems unresolved by experts. Gates[1] suggested that
an average child required thirty-five repetitions for
mastery, Spache[2] concluded that six repetitions or more is
close to a minimum for mastery and, more recently,
De Boer and Dallman[3] have said that, "The question of the
number of repetitions needed for every new word and the
length of the interval at which the repetition should be

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[1] Arthur I. Gates, The Improvement of Reading. New
York: The MacMillan Company, 1947, p. 505.

[2] George Spache, "New Trends in Primary Grade
Readers," Elementary School Journal, 42:284, December,
1941.

[3] John J. de Boer and Martha Dallman, The Teaching
of Reading. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.,
1960, p. 99.

provided cannot be decided scientifically. . . . " It seems probable that publishers can provide adequate repetition for average readers but, finally, it is the teacher who must decide whether any of the reading materials provide the desirable proportion of new words and the appropriate number of repetitions for his pupils.

Readability

An objective measure of the difficulty of each reader in four series was obtained by the application of the Spache readability formula. It was not considered necessary to apply the formula to readers of the Curriculum Foundation Series, as the difficulty of these readers was controlled by the publishers; each reader has the grade level for its use indicated on the cover. The formula was applied to five samples in texts containing approximately one hundred pages; ten samples were rated in longer books. The samples were taken at equal intervals throughout each text. The average readability rating of each book in the four series is recorded in Table VI. A score of 2.6 means that the book is equal in difficulty to a reader commonly used in the sixth month of the second grade. A work sheet for the application of the readability formula is in Appendix B (II).

TABLE VI

SPACHE READABILITY PLACEMENT OF FOUR SERIES OF READERS

| Series | Grade Placement - Spache | | | | |
	Primers One	Two	Book One	Book Two	Book Three
Canadian Readers	2.6	3.8		4.8	6.9
Royal Crown Readers	1.8	2.6	3.3	4.0	4.6
Imperial Readers			2.0	3.5	3.7
Elson-Gray Basic Readers	1.8		2.4	3.0	3.5

Table VI shows (1) that readers have become easier during the period under study, (2) that there is a somewhat consistent gradation of difficulty between readers within a series; the two exceptions are the small difference in degree of difficulty between the Imperial Book Two and Book Three, and the greater degree of difficulty between Book Two and Book Three of the Canadian Readers than at the other levels within the same series. The range of difficulty of the samples taken within each reader are given in Tables VII to X.

Table VII shows that the primers of the Canadian Readers would be considered, by today's standard, suitable for use in Grades two and three; the samples

within these readers show approximately the same degree of difficulty. However, the range of difficulty within Book Two and Three is very wide (the difference between the easiest and most difficult sample within Book Three is 4.6); the samples, listed in the order that they were distributed through the readers, indicate that there was no progression of difficulty to assist children who were learning to read.

TABLE VII

SPACHE READABILITY PLACEMENT OF SELECTED PARAGRAPHS
CANADIAN READERS: EDUCATIONAL SERIES

	First Primer	Second Primer	Book Two	Book Three
	2.3	4.1	4.6	6.3
	2.4	4.0	4.8	6.9
	2.9	4.0	4.1	7.7
	2.7	4.4	5.8	6.0
	2.8	2.9	5.4	8.0
	13.1	19.4	4.4	5.8
			5.3	10.1
Average:	2.6	3.8	6.2	5.5
			4.6	6.2
			3.7	7.1
			48.9	69.6
		Average:	4.8	6.9

The Spache grade placement of the _Royal Crown Readers_, shown in Table VIII, indicates that the publishers exerted considerable control over the content of these readers as the gradation of difficulty between readers

is fairly consistent. The widest range of difficulty
between samples appears in Book Three with a difference of
2.3 between the easiest and most difficult; however, this
doesn't appear to be a serious fault at this grade level
at which point pupils would have developed a considerable
degree of mastery in reading.

TABLE VIII

SPACHE READABILITY PLACEMENT OF SELECTED PARAGRAPHS
ROYAL CROWN READERS

	Primer Part I	Primer Part II	Book One	Book Two	Book Three
	1.7	2.1	3.3	4.3	5.8
	1.9	2.7	3.2	3.8	3.5
	1.8	3.2	2.6	3.7	5.2
	1.8	2.5	2.7	3.9	4.9
	2.1	2.6	4.0	3.8	4.7
	9.3	13.1	2.7	3.7	4.3
			2.9	4.3	4.0
Average:	1.8	2.6	4.3	4.4	5.1
			4.5	4.0	3.8
			33.3	40.7	46.3
		Average:	3.3	4.0	4.6

It is probably that the grades in which the
Imperial Readers were used was not satisfactory. Table IX
shows that Book One and Book Two are difficult for Grades
one and two to which they were assigned; however, Book
Three would seem easy to children who could read Book Two
with facility as it is only slightly more difficult.

TABLE IX

SPACHE READABILITY PLACEMENT OF SELECTED PARAGRAPHS
IMPERIAL READERS

	Book One	Book Two	Book Three
	2.2	4.3	3.5
	2.1	2.1	4.5
	1.9	2.9	3.4
	1.9	3.3	4.8
	2.1	2.8	3.2
	10.2	15.4	2.9
			3.7
Average:	2.0	3.5	3.6
			4.0
			37.0
		Average:	3.7

The Elson-Gray Basic Readers contain a more
consistent grade placement of sample paragraphs throughout
each reader than was apparent in any of the other series.
However, it is noted that in terms of difficulty there is
only 1.7 difference between the Primer and Book III; this
seems a rather small gradation between the first book that
a pupil would use and one which he would use two years
later.

TABLE X

SPACHE READABILITY PLACEMENT OF SELECTED PARAGRAPHS
ELSON-GRAY BASIC READERS

	Primer	Book One	Book Two	Book Three
	1.7	2.7	2.5	3.8
	2.0	2.4	3.5	3.8
	1.8	2.7	3.2	3.6
	2.0	2.3	2.9	3.2
	1.8	2.6	2.8	3.8
	1.7	2.2	3.3	3.2
	2.0	2.5	2.8	3.5
	1.8	2.2	3.2	3.7
	2.0	2.5	3.2	2.7
	1.8	2.5	3.4	3.9
	18.6	24.6	30.8	35.4
Average:	1.8	2.4	3.0	3.5

Having determined that the four series of readers
were more difficult than the Curriculum Foundation Series
now in use, the question arose as to whether these old
texts would be considered difficult for present day
Montreal children. To answer this question, a
comparison was made of the objective measure of difficulty
of certain selected paragraphs, as compared to the
teachers' judgment of the difficulty of the same material,
as applied to their own pupils. A somewhat similar
grade placement of reading materials, based on children's
preferences for books, was made as early as 1928 by

Vogel and Washburne.[4]

A survey was conducted in nine schools in Montreal, and a tenth school was selected from a suburban community. The Montreal schools were selected from a map which had been partitioned into equal sections for this purpose. From each section a school was chosen at random. The pupils, in the schools represented, came from a wide range of socio-economic backgrounds.

Each teacher, from Grades one to seven in these schools, was asked to select from his class three pupils of average ability. These pupils, in turn, were asked to read orally as many as possible of ten paragraphs that had been selected from readers in the study.

The paragraphs were chosen to represent a progression of difficulty. Each was approximately one hundred words long. None were selected from the Curriculum Foundation Series as these are familiar to the pupils; nor were any selected from extremely simple primer material. A paragraph was rated as readable if a pupil could read it with five or less mistakes. This procedure for determining the difficulty of the

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[4] Mabel Vogel and Carleton Washburne, "An Objective Method of Determining Grade Placement of Children's Reading Materials," Elementary School Journal, 28:373-381, January, 1928.

paragraphs was chosen because, according to Durrell, the chief difficulty that primary children encounter in reading is in word recognition. It was on the basis of word recognition that the empirical judgment was made.

> To determine whether the difficulties of word recognition in a given book do not make it unsuited for a particular child, the child may be asked to read from it orally a selection he has never read before. A selection should be approximately one hundred words long. . . .
>
> . . . In the usual classroom practice, it appears that children find difficulty in mastering material containing more than one difficult word in twenty running words. Some authorities hold that even this moderate number of new words is an unwise, and often unsafe, vocabulary burden for most children unless their reading development is checked and directed with exceptional frequency and skill. Independent silent reading ordinarily requires even easier material, unless the child has unusual skill in word analysis.[5]

The percentage of pupils able to read paragraphs at each grade level has been recorded in Table XI; the Spache placement level of the paragraphs has also been indicated.

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[5] Donald D. Durrell, "Individual Differences and Their Implications with Respect to Instruction in Reading," The Teaching of Reading: A Second Report. The Thirty-sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1937, p. 333.

TABLE XI

PERCENTAGES OF PUPILS WHO WERE ABLE TO READ
SELECTED PARAGRAPHS

Paragraphs	Spache Placement	Grade Level of Pupils						
		I	II	III	IV	V	VI	VII
1	1.8	12	87	100	100	97	100	100
2	2.8		33	98	99	96	100	97
3	3.1		26	93	93	97	100	100
4	3.4		21	89	91	96	97	100
5	3.8		18	87	83	96	96	97
6	4.3		21	86	87	96	100	89
7	5.4		11	77	80	88	93	95
8	6.2		3	32	52	65	75	90
9	7.1		3	33	51	64	82	82
10	10.1		0	5	24	34	58	79
Number of Pupils per Grade:		48	72	63	75	75	72	39
Total number of pupils: 444								

It should be noted that the survey gives approximate results. Each teacher was expected to make two judgments: (1) to select three average pupils and, (2) to judge the pupils' success in reading. A more authentic appraisal might have been made if the pupils had been selected on the basis of their standardized reading scores, and had one person conducted the test.

However, the results of a more refined study were reported by MacLeod.[6] The purpose was to obtain an empirical estimate of the difficulty of readers in work dealing with backward pupils. The pupils required interesting, but simple books. Two groups of pupils were used in the study. The first group of 250 had been assessed on a word recognition test; the second group of 375 had been given a comprehension test. The readers used in the study had been rated by the Spache and Dolch readability formulas. The reading age, at which fifty per cent of the pupils could read the samples from the readers, was defined as the difficulty level of the book. The experimenter reached the conclusion that readability levels, according to Spache and Dolch, bore no relationship to the experimental findings, or to each other.

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[6] John MacLeod, "The Estimation of Readability of Books of Low Difficulty," British Journal of Educational Psychology, 32:112-118, June, 1962.

The Montreal survey was conducted in the fourth month of the term, which meant, in effect, that the paragraphs at the Grade one and two level were too difficult for the pupils of each of these grades at this time. The results show that only twelve per cent of Grade one pupils and thirty seven per cent of Grade two pupils could read the paragraphs at their grade level. Beyond Grade two, the percentage of pupils reading paragraphs which were rated above their own grade level was high. For example, eighty per cent of Grade four pupils could read a paragraph at the 5.4 placement level, and half of the pupils could read a paragraph rated 7.1. In Grade three, eighty-six per cent of pupils were able to read a paragraph rated 4.3, and seventy-seven per cent were able to read a paragraph rated 5.4.

The results make one question the validity of the Spache readability formula. According to Russell, "The Spache Readability Formula is probably the best single measure of difficulty of primary materials."[7] However, there is the possibility, that the word list used for measuring the difficulty of words in the sample may not be suitable when applied to former reading texts. If we

[7] David H. Russell, "An Evaluation of Some Easy-to-Read Trade Books for Children," Elementary English, November, 1961, p. 478.

accept the fact that the formula is valid, and the results are accurate, then the selection of pupils and testing procedures were incorrect. If the selection of pupils and the testing procedures were accurate, and the results indicate the appropriate level of reading for average children, then the Spache formula did not indicate correctly the grade placement of the paragraphs selected from old readers. If, then, the requirements of selection and testing have been carried out fully and the formula is valid, the results of the survey indicate that Montreal children read above the level of the normative sample.

If Montreal children do read above the level of average children elsewhere, then serious consideration should be given to the texts which are assigned to these pupils. An obvious weakness is apparent in that reading texts, assigned a grade level by publishers, are being read by pupils who may find them too simple to challenge their abilities. A possible solution to the problem of the selection of readable texts for children, would be in permitting teachers to make the selection of texts for their particular pupils on subjective judgment, or through the application of a readability formula to reading materials other than the basic texts; to select, in fact, reading books suited to the pupils requirements rather than accepting a text authorized for a particular grade

level.

Content of readers

Strictures against the content of readers are not new. Today the criticism is focussed on the inane conversations of stereotyped children in stereotyped settings. In the past,a phonic primer was referred to as the "I See Sam Book" -- a sentence from the repetitious content served as a title. Parents who recall the difficulty of learning to read by phonic primers are inclined to term today's readers too easy. The validity of the criticism of the content of any reader, must be judged in terms of what the content is intended to accomplish. There is no doubt that through the content of a reader, a pupil acquires the basic skills of reading. But the acquisition of skill should not be an end in itself; it is only of benefit if it is put to use in voluntary reading. The extent to which reading is used outside the daily lesson will depend upon the attitudes toward reading that instruction builds. Therefore, it is essential that the materials of reading create interest during the learning period, and arouse desirable attitudes toward further reading for enjoyment and for information.

In assessing the content of readers, it is necessary to consider (1) the manner in which the material

contributes to basic instruction, (2) the extent to which
the material relates to the interest of children and (3)
the degree to which the material cultivates further
interest in reading.

Canadian Readers, Educational Series

Before considering the content of the Canadian
Readers, it must be noted that each reader in the series
did not correspond to a grade level as readers do today.
At the time that these texts were used (1890 - 1910), a
pupil was "in a reader", rather than in a grade; for this
reason, they must be considered as the first books that
were read in school.

First Primer

The content of this primer was not intended
primarily to interest the child, but to instruct him in the
basic skill of word recognition. The new words, introduced
in the first half of the text, were based on the single
sound value of each of the twenty-six letters of the
alphabet, presented in association with small pictures
on each page. The reading material constructed from these
words lacked continuity of thought. As Gray commented
on the material of early primers, the results of reading
the pages from bottom to top would be just as sensible as

reading from top to bottom.[8] The lessons from the primer

given below are examples of the dull content of much of

the text.

Lesson Three

1. I see an egg.
2. This is a pen.
3. That is a hen.
4. I see an egg, and a pen, and a hen.
5. The hen has ten eggs.

Lesson Four

1. a hen, an egg, and a pen.
2. ten men, ten eggs, and ten hens.
3. ten hens had ten eggs.
4. the cat sees the hen.
5. run, hen, run.

With lesson four, were the words egg, hen, pen, and men,

in script. These were to be practised by the pupils

as a writing and spelling exercise. The pattern of the

lessons in the second part of the primer was similar,

but of increased length, based on the sounds of diphthongs

and digraphs. Writing lessons, associated with the reading,

incorporated the new words in four-line rhymes. Typical of

this section is Lesson Two.

Lesson Two

1. Ma-ma gave me this book.
2. The cook put the fish in the dish.
3. The rook sat on the tall tree.
4. The fox sat at the foot.

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[8] William S. Gray, On Their Own in Reading. Chicago:
Scott, Foresman and Company, 1948, p. 19.

5. The brook is cool.
6. The man shot all the rooks.
7. Ned took the rooks from the man.
8. I hit my foot on a stick.
9. Get a spool, a spoon, and ten hooks.
10. The wind shook the nuts from the trees.

When the first two sections of the reader had been completed, pupils were considered ready to undertake more interesting and advanced reading. It was at this point that two stories with developed plots, and three short poems were introduced; this material was intended to enliven interest in reading.

Second Primer

The more interesting reading material found at the end of the first primer, suggested that once pupils had mastered the mechanics of reading, they were ready for greater variety in content. This meant a considerable increase in vocabulary, disproportionate to the reading attainment that the pupils had reached by the standards of today. Because of the nature of the content of the stories, a clear cut analysis of this reader was difficult; many of the selections consisted of related sentences, but did not fall into any particular classification. However, an estimate of the content has been made. Stories of birds, animals and children's pets accounted for about one-fifth of the content; poetry and the activities of

children, each accounted for a third of the space. A small portion, five per cent, was used for both informational and moralistic selections. Only one story in the entire book had definite plot structure; this narrative, more than a page in length, accounted for two per cent of the space.

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Selections, intended to teach a moral, included no subtlety. An example of this is "The Blind Man and Roger." The third paragraph describes how tragedy befell the man.

> He said he lost his eyes, while playing carelessly
> on the day the Queen was crowned.

Accidents, sickness, and death, were considered just as suitable as topics for children as those which dealt with childhood activities. The sadness and harsh realities of life that were part of the content are reflected in the following story.

Good-night

1. Mabel is kissing grand-pa good-night. Her mother was his own little girl long ago, but she is dead.
2. Mabel's father was lost at sea. He was captain of a large ship, and one dark night the wind blew so hard that his ves-sel was driven on a rock-y shore and he was drowned.
3. His poor wife, when she heard the sad news of his death, fell sick and died. Mabel's grand-pa then took her to live with him.

Book Two and Three

Quantitative analysis of topics differed in these readers; however, a general statement is possible

concerning the purpose of the selections, and the relationship of the reader to the total curriculum. A cursory glance at the following titles, culled from both texts, "The Squirrel," "The Mother Bear and Her Cub," "Iron," "Flying Kites," and "Fidelity and Perseverance," suggests variety, and perhaps, interesting reading. Singularly enough, most of the material of these early readers was didactic. The didactism was both moral and intellectual; every selection was intended to teach. Informational selections were weighted with facts, which, no doubt, pupils were expected to learn, as the questions which followed the reading selections demanded knowledge of specific details.

A tendency to insert material of a highly informational nature into narrative was obvious. An example of this is found in the following story which began: "In a far-off northern land, where there is nothing but ice and snow, lived a white she-bear with her two young ones." The paragraphs which followed described not only the adventures of the bears, but included information about the whaling activities of Scottish sailors. The narrative was resumed with the sailors locating and killing the bears. The ending illustrates the tendency of the period toward sentimental interpretation.

The mother-bear raised such a cry of pain and grief to the skies, that it might have touched the heart of the dullest person in the whole ship. But the sailor loaded again, and with a third ball he laid the poor mother-bear dead upon the ice.

The last and most difficult selection in Book Three was an exposition on alcohol and its effects. In the exercises that followed the reading selection, it was suggested that pupils commit to memory seventeen short paragraphs. Two of these paragraphs follow:

It incites the father to butcher his helpless offspring, helps the husband to murder his wife, and teaches the child to grind the parricidal axe. It burns up men, consumes women, detests life, curses God and despises heaven.

It suborns witnesses, nurses perjury, defiles the jury-box, and stains the judge's ermine. It degrades the citizen, debases the legislator, dishonors the statesman, and disarms the patriot.

These paragraphs were difficult, not only in the vocabulary used, but also in context, and would be difficult for many pupils of fourteen today. To assist pupils with the meanings of words, glossaries preceded each selection. Only two words in the above paragraphs appear in the glossary with the selection -- parricidal and suborns. It probably can be assumed that pupils frequently read and also memorized material which had no meaning for them, and certainly held no interest.

Unlike the moralistic, and extremely difficult content of the above selection, the first story in the

reader was a delightful tale about a cat and some rabbits. However, in a foot-note to the story, apologies were made for the inclusion of a tale of such simplicity; the purpose of the insertion was to provide material that would give practice in "bright, lively reading".

Most of the reading selections were followed by exercises; these included long lists of questions about details of the reading matter, sentences in script that were to be copied for handwriting practice, and lists of words to be spelled and their meanings learned. There were suggestions for maps and pictures to be drawn, compositions to be written, and grammatical exercises to be completed. In fact, all of the language arts, as they are known today, and those aspects of social studies related to the selections in the reader, were included in exercises of the reader. At the present time, too, many activities are suggested extensions of the reading program. However, the range of materials is wider, and the purpose is one of extending interest beyond the basal reading text. It can hardly be believed that the former pattern was conceived by the pupils as anything but drudgery.

The content of both Book Two and Three included poetry, and animal stories, humourous and historical selections, and moralistic narratives. The percentage of pages given to each classification of literary content

follows in Table XII.

TABLE XII

ANALYSIS OF CONTENT OF CANADIAN READERS: PERCENTAGE OF PAGES IN EACH CLASSIFICATION

Classification of Content	Book Two	Book Three
Animal stories	12	4
Fable	5	
History	3	10
Humour	3	4
Information	21	23
Moralistic narrative	7	14
Modern fanciful tales		1
Poetry	20	11
Scripture		1
Exercises	16	20
Illustration	13	12
	100	100

Royal Crown Readers

The Royal Crown Readers were used in Montreal as
early as 1909,[9] and were withdrawn from the Course of
Study in 1936; this represents the longest period of use
for any of the readers that have been considered in this
study.

Primer, Part One

The lessons of this primer were based on the
phonetic elements of words which were taught in
association with pictures. For example, pictures
illustrating the letter sounds of a, m, s, and p formed
the basis of the first lesson. Having made the association
between the pictures and the letter sounds, the sounds
were synthesized then to produce the words Sam, mamma,
and papa. Since it was not possible to form sentences
with these three words, the inclusion of another word was
necessary. Therefore, the word 'see', unrelated
phonetically to the other three, was introduced as a sight
word. The sentences were arranged to provide drill on
the words of the lesson, and as a result, were short,
unrelated, and formed no discernible pattern.

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[9] Memoranda of Instructions for Teachers. Quebec:
The Department of Education, 1909, p. 33.

Lesson I, typical of the content of this reader, follows:

Lesson One

I see Sam.
I see mamma.
See, mamma!
See, Sam, mamma!
See! See! See!
I see, papa.
Papa, see mamma.
Papa, see Sam.
I see a (picture of a cat)
I see a (picture of a rabbit)

The same words were repeated frequently for the next

thirty-five lessons in association with the activities of

children, or in practice sentences following nursery

rhyme selections. The constant repetition resulted in

much dull material; the only variety to the phonetic

content was the inclusion of thirteen nursery rhymes,

a simple narrative, and a fable.

Throughout the text were lists of words, included

for phonetic drill. The exercise, associated with Lesson

twenty seven, follows:

b.all	ca.tch	t.oss	l.ost	ch.ip
w.all	la.tch	b.oss	c.ost	ch.ick
f.all	ma.tch	l.oss		ch.eep
t.all	ba.tch	m.oss		ch.eer
h.all	pa.tch			
	ha.tch			

Exercises of a similar nature, in which there is

substitution of initial consonants, is part of reading

programs today; however, the exercises are not contained

in the reader itself, but in the teacher's manual or in

workbook materials. In the second column, the consonant-vowel combinations such as ca, la, and ba are noted; these combinations were common in former phonic programs, and were known as "families". Such consonant-vowel combinations are not emphasized in phonetic analysis, at present, as they lead to confusion in attacking words which have the same initial letters, but have an entirely different pronunciation (e.g. car, care, call, caw).[10]

Primer, Part Two

The pattern of basic instruction, begun in the first primer, continued in this text with emphasis on the sounds of diphthongs and digraphs. About one quarter of the entire text of seventy-seven pages was given over to lessons based on the phonetic elements of words. However, the amount of space given to this type of instruction does not indicate the amount of time that pupils must have spent in mastering such dull and meaningless material. An example of the material of the reader, based on the digraph ea, and the words, beak, meat, eat, near, and fear, follows:

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[10] William S. Gray, On Their Own in Reading. Chicago: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1948, pp.92-93.

> The beak of a bird is sharp.
> What do baby crows eat?
> They eat meat and flies and worms.
> The old crow teaches them.
> They will not come near the sheaf.
> The scare-crow man is there.
> The crows fear him.

The remaining pages of the text covered a range of topics,
including poetry, informational selections, myths and
fables. The approximate amount of space given to each
type of content is shown in Table XIII.

TABLE XIII

ANALYSIS OF CONTENT OF ROYAL CROWN READER: PRIMER II.
PERCENTAGE OF PAGES IN EACH CLASSIFICATION.

Content	Percentage of Pages
Fables	3
Folk tales	19
Information	10
Myths, legends	11
Poetry	11
Phonics	22
Miscellaneous	10
Illustration	14
	100

Of the selections classified as informational,
approximately one-half were nature topics. The
miscellaneous selections included riddles, pages of
questions and answers, and small groups of sentences,
classified as silent reading. An example of a silent
reading selection follows:

> I put a quarter on the table.
> I lift a quart measure.
> I take five quiet steps, then stop.
> I cut a piece of paper in squares.

The nature of the above exercise and the fact that such
a small amount of material was labelled silent reading
clearly indicates that reading was taught entirely
by oral procedures.

Book One and Two

The literary content of Book One and Two of the
Royal Crown Readers (ed. 1926) was varied, including
historical and informational selections, poetry and
fanciful tales, and moral and realistic narratives. A
noticeable trend toward more realistic narrative, related
to the activities of children, was evident, in contrast to
the didactic material of the Canadian Readers. However,
a large portion of the Royal Crown Readers was also given
over to informational selections and poetry, as was the
pattern of the past. Poems were distributed liberally

throughout the text, and in addition, an entire section of each book was devoted to poetry. A second noticeable change was the lack of exercises following the stories. Short lists of words with diacritical markings accompanied the selections, and were no doubt included for drill purposes; but glossaries, word building and spelling exercises, were confined to the back of the book. An analysis of the content of these readers follows in Table XIV.

TABLE XIV

ANALYSIS OF CONTENT OF ROYAL CROWN READERS
BOOKS ONE AND TWO
PERCENTAGE OF PAGES IN EACH CLASSIFICATION

Classification	Book One	Book Two
Animal stories	12	4
Fable	1	
Folk tale		3
History	6	4
Information	14	28
Modern fanciful stories	10	6
Moralistic narrative	2	12
Poetry	13	12
Realistic narrative	17	13
Illustration	25	18
Total content	100	100

Imperial Readers

These readers, introduced about 1919,[11] provided an
interesting contrast to those of the earlier periods, both
in the approach to the teaching of reading and in the
content. The purpose of the readers was to introduce
pupils to good literature, and the emphasis of instruction
was upon the meaning of the selections, rather than on the
mechanics of reading. The books were based on the rhyme
method. Nursery rhymes were committed to memory, then they
were read word by word from the blackboard until
association was established between the sound of the words
and the printed symbol.

Book One

Mother Goose nursery rhymes were the distinguishing
feature of this reader; each was presented with a suitable
illustration. Following each rhyme was a series of
sentences based on the words introduced in the verse.
Unfortunately, the sentences were unrelated to each other
due to the limited number of different words, thus defeating
the purpose of the book which was to present meaningful

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[11] *Educational Record.* Quebec: Department of
Education, 39:189, April-June, 1919.

material from the beginning. An example of the unrelated
sentences of the reader appear below.

> Mother had a big plum pudding.
> It had a string around it.
> The cat got the string.
> She has run away with it.
> Has she eaten the pudding?
> Jack Horner has eaten some pie.
> Baby has eaten some cake.
> The cow has eaten some corn.
> The baker has eaten some rolls.
> Tommy has eaten some bread and butter.
> What shall I do, Mother?
> The pig has eaten roast beef.

Similar sentences occupied two and one-half pages following
a Rhyme, entitled, "Sing, Sing, What Shall I Sing." It would
seem that a succession of unrelated sentences would result
in guessing and word calling.

The first seventy-five pages included twenty-five
nursery rhymes and the prose exercises that accompanied
them. The remainder of the text (thirty-seven pages)
consisted of simple stories of children's activities,
incorporating much of the vocabulary of the previous
selections; again, the result was the same type of
unrelated sentences, as has already been noted. The
literary content of this later section of the text
included a fable, a cumulative Mother Goose rhyme -- "This
is the House That Jack Built," and a few informational
selections.

Book <u>Two</u> <u>and</u> <u>Three</u>

Book <u>Two</u> <u>and</u> <u>Three</u> of the <u>Imperial</u> <u>Readers</u> were free
of the meaningless material found in the first book of the
series; these more advanced readers contained largely
stories from literature, including folk tales and fables,
and many fanciful tales from both Grimm, and Andersen.
Readers of similar content began to appear in the United
States about 1880, a reflection of a movement which
considered the school reader a medium for arousing
interest in literary materials that would carry over to
adult life. This movement persisted until about 1918.
However, one cannot assume that a movement begun so much
earlier elsewhere, resulted in the publication of the
<u>Imperial</u> <u>Readers</u>.

The prose selections of these readers did not lend
themselves to the memorization that was characteristic of
the reading lessons of the first reader; at this stage of
reading development phonic groups of words were used as
the teacher found them needful; arrangements of phonic
word groups were distributed throughout Book Two, but were
confined to a section at the back of the reader in
Book Three. Spelling and phonic word-building were
closely related in the exercises provided in the reader.
The approximate number of pages given to each

classification of content appears in the following Table.

TABLE XV

ANALYSIS OF CONTENT OF IMPERIAL READERS:
BOOKS TWO AND THREE
PERCENTAGE OF PAGES IN EACH CLASSIFICATION

Classification	Book Two	Book Three
Animal	3	1
Fable	4	6
Folk Tale	20	5
Information	5	11
Modern fanciful tales	21	33
Myth, legend		6
Realistic narrative	11	2
Poetry	15	17
Scripture	6	4
Illustration	15	15
	100	100

Elson-Gray Basic Readers

These readers, introduced in 1934, reflected the research of the Twenties, concerning the relationship of vocabulary to readability and children's preferences in reading selections; they reflected, also, the broadened

objectives of the reading program as outlined in the Twenty-fourth Yearbook. The emphasis, on the need to provide wider experiences for children through reading, was shown in the wider range of topics provided in the texts. At the same time consideration was given to developing adequate reading skills through graded materials, based on selected vocabulary and adequate repetition of words.

The pre-primer was an innovation of this period; it was an attempt to provide stories, based on the activities and interests of children, and at the same time to limit the introduction of new words in the beginning stage of reading. There was much repetition of words and phrases, but reasonable sequence of thought in the sentences, in spite of the limitation of words; at the same time, the verbal text was supplemented by the ideas conveyed in the illustrations.

A distinctive feature of each reader in the series was the inclusion of a word list, at the back of the book, which indicated to teachers the page at which each new word was introduced, and which words were carried over from the previous reader. Another significant trend, noticeable beyond the pre-primer, was that the content of each reader was classified into units. These units included several stories related to a particular theme.

Common to all of the readers were themes which dealt with children and their pets, bird and animal stories, fairy tales, and stories for holidays. Additional units were added to the more advanced readers to parallel the maturing interests and abilities of the pupils. The purpose of the units was to provide an area of interest for group work, to motivate children to read additional stories on the same theme, and to provide a central topic of interest for combined classes in rural schools. Noteworthy changes in content were a minimum amount of poetry, information contained in narrative form, and the inclusion of more humorous tales and animal stories. In analysing the content of the Elson-Gray Basic Readers, it has seemed advisable to use the classification provided by the publishers. There are several reasons for this: (1) all of the selections were written in narrative form, (2) there were no informational or moralistic selections to compare with those of earlier readers (3) scripture was omitted and poetry was negligible in quantity. For comparative purposes, it is easy to distinguish the types of stories included by the unit title. The classification of content of the Primer is shown in Table XVI.

TABLE XVI

ANALYSIS OF CONTENT OF THE ELSON-GRAY BASIC PRIMER:
PERCENTAGE OF PAGES IN EACH CLASSIFICATION

Units	Percentage of Pages
Pets	13
Play time	15
Birds and animals	15
Happy day stories (holidays)	10
Once upon a time stories	15
Illustration	32
Total	100

TABLE XVII

ANALYSIS OF CONTENT OF ELSON-GRAY BASIC READERS:
PERCENTAGE OF PAGES IN EACH CLASSIFICATION

Classification	Book One	Book Two	Book Three
Boys, girls, pets and play	9	12	
Brave and true (hero)		8	15
Fairy tales			13
Holidays	9	8	8
Just for fun	13	13	
Old tales	14	12	10
Out of doors	12	10	10
Poetry		1	2
Stories from everywhere			8
Workers (big and little)	13	9	10
Questions			3
Illustration	30	27	21
Total	100	100	100

Curriculum Foundation Series

The first edition of the Curriculum Foundation Series,
published in 1941, was authorized for use in Quebec schools
in 1944; the revised edition (1956), currently in use, is
considered here. This series presents the most comprehensive
set of reading materials of any of the series used to date.
At the pre-reading level, there are readiness books,
designed to develop interpretive, visual, auditory, motor,
and language skills. It is customary to use these picture
texts in the kindergarten. At the Grade one level, there are
three pre-primers, one primer, and a first reader.
Accompanying the texts are workbooks for the pupils for the
purpose of developing word recognition and comprehension
skills.

The materials for Grades two and three include two
basal readers and two workbooks at each level. For each
grade, teachers' manuals suggest in detail how each lesson
may be taught. Provision is made for extra reading for
enrichment or remedial work through supplementary and
transitional readers of the same series. Suggestions for
using other related materials, such as poetry and story
anthologies, text films, word and phrase cards, recording
and evaluation devices, are included in the manuals. All of
these materials are provided by the publishers to make the

series as self-contained as possible. For enriching the work of the lessons, and for broadening the experiences of the pupils, further suggestions are contained in the manual to relate the work of the reader to the broad field of the language arts, social studies, and art activities.

The stories of this series deal largely with the activities of primary age children in their homes, schools, and community. The themes of the stories involve the play and work activities of children, their interest in pets and other animals, and the workers and machines essential in serving a community. The first stories of the readers deal with the immediate environment of the home; later stories reflect the life of the more distant city or country. Frequently, the characters in the same family appear throughout the text to provide continuity. Diversion from the themes of family activities is provided in units of fanciful tales and the marvels of nature.

Pre-Primers, Primer and Book One

These texts contain units of stories that deal with the work and play activities of one family. In the first half of the Primer, the activities are centered mainly around the home; the second part branches out to the farm and more distant areas of interest. In addition to the units relating to childhood experience, Book One includes

a unit of folk and fanciful tales.

Books Two[1] and Two[2]

These readers follow the pattern established in the first books of the series. They contain stories of childhood experience, animal stories, fanciful tales, and a unit of old folk tales which is an added attraction at this level.

Books Three[1] and Three[2]

These readers contain units which follow the general pattern established in the previous books, and in addition, fables appear along with folk tales; historical narratives and stories of distant places appear for the first time.

Because the content of the series of readers bears no resemblance to the first three series under study, and because the themes of units within the series are continuous, it has been considered advisable to accept the publisher's analysis of the content of the series. Table XVIII contains the quantitative analysis of content.

TABLE XVIII

ANALYSIS OF THE CONTENT OF
THE NEW CURRICULUM FOUNDATION SERIES +

Interest area	Stories per Grade		
	Grade I	Grade II	Grade III
Everyday experiences	92	41	21
Marvels of nature	17	15	16
Fun and fancy	7	20	15
Famous tales of long ago		12	16
Early days in our country			6
Life in other places			6

+ Scott, Foresman and Company Handbook, "Presenting the New Basic Reading Program," 1956, p. 7.

Illustration

Pictures begin to have a fascination for most children about the age of two, when they can recognize in pictures, objects with which they are familiar.[11] This interest grows gradually, and by the age of seven, children can identify, not only objects in pictures, but some of the

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[11] M.D. Vernon, The Psychology of Perception. Great Britain: C. Nicholls and Company Limited, 1962, p.102.

more obvious activities as well. This interest in, and understanding of pictures has implications for teachers of reading.

Alone, pictures are of doubtful value, but when their use is guided by an alert teacher, they can serve many purposes. In the pre-reading and early reading stages, pictures serve to stimulate conversation, broaden concepts, and to develop vocabulary. Of further importance, is their function in "bridging the gap between the reality of objects and the symbolism of the printed words."[12] At a later stage, they provide clues to the meaning of the verbal context. At all times, illustrations can arouse and sustain interest in reading. If guidance is not given in the interpretation of pictures, insignificant details may come into focus, or identification of already familiar objects only, will take place.

Even to the uninitiated in the artistic merits of illustration, and in the technical matter of reproduction, obvious changes have occurred in the types of illustration in the series of readers under study. An attempt has been made (1) to analyse the more obvious changes that have taken place in the quality of illustrations and, (2) to estimate

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[12] George D. Spache, "Auditory and Visual Materials," Development in and Through Reading. The Sixtieth Yearbook of The National Society for the Study of Education, Part I. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961, p. 216.

the quantity of illustration in relation to the total content of the texts. The quantitative analysis is only an approximate measure due to the irregularity of the size and shape of the pictures. Consideration has also been given to the purposes that the illustrations have served in developing reading skills, and in stimulating interest in the verbal text.

Canadian Readers: Educational Series
First Primer

The small size of the illustrations was the most striking feature in this text. Line engravings, less than one inch square, were typical. Across the top of most of the pages (twenty out of a total of thirty-two) were three of these small pictures, representing the words to be introduced in the lessons. The premise was that "the alphabet is best taught in words," and, "that words are best taught in and through pictures."[13] In actual fact, the Primers were suited to either the alphabet or word method of teaching reading, and they were selected with this adaptation in mind. Larger illustrations accompanied the poems and narratives in the latter part of the text, and were inserted for interest. There was one full-page

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[13] Preface, Canadian Readers: Educational Series, First Primer. Toronto: W.J. Gage and Company Limited, 1881.

illustration, four half-pages, and one of three-quarter page size. The total amount of illustration represented approximately twenty-two per cent of the text.

In addition to the illustration, several pages were given over to the alphabet in both print and script form; these pages were intended for reference by the pupils in order that they could learn the letter names, distinguish the letters in their various forms, and use them as models for writing lessons.

Second Primer

The illustrations of the Second Primer were larger than those just described, and served a different purpose. They were related to the subject of the lesson, rather than to the words, and were "inserted to supply motive and interest to the child to interpret the symbol given." A second aim was to have children "value their primer on account of the beauty of its illustrations."[14] There were two full-page, twenty-six half-page, and nineteen quarter-page pictures, which was approximately one third of the total of sixty-four pages of text. Most of the illustrations were placed across the top of the page, but the occasional

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[14] Preface, Canadian Readers: Educational Series, Second Primer. Toronto: W.J. Gage and Company Limited, 1881.

one broke into the text at various points, breaking the
continuity of the sentences.

Book Two and Three

There were many noteworthy features in the
engravings of these early texts. Infinite time and care
went into the original line-drawings, and many of them were
signed by the artists. No object or detail was omitted
from the main subject or activity of the pictures, nor
from the romantic background against which it was set. An
obvious interest in nature was reflected in the fine
detailed drawings of birds, animals, and flowers that were
the main objects in some of the illustrations, and also in
the use of details of nature to form interesting background
for pictures. This interest in nature was evident also, in
the tail pieces inserted at the end of selections; tiny
birds, animals, flowers, and scrolls were executed in
finest detail and added variety to the format.

The illustrations which accompanied informational
selections, on the whole, did not add any detail which was
not stated in the verbal text; those which accompanied the
poetry and narratives included background details that may
have been used to stimulate discussion.

There was no prescribed shape to the pictures, nor
to the page placement in Book Two. Some pictures were

framed on three sides, the fourth side projecting into the text; other pictures broke into the text at many points. Excluding the tail pieces, illustration accounted for approximately thirteen per cent of the total space.

In Book Three, there was more regularity in the shape of the pictures, and in their page placement. Most of the illustrations were rectangular, and were placed either across the top or in the center of the pages. There were five full-page pictures, and many others of various dimensions which represented about twelve per cent of the text. This figure does not take into account the tail pieces.

Royal Crown Readers

Phonic Primer, Part One

The simple black and white line-drawings of this primer were intended to instruct; at the same time, they may have created interest for the pupil. There were three obvious classifications of pictures. Throughout the text proper, there were thirty-three pictures less than an inch square. These pictures were used in association with the sounds of letters, diphthongs, and digraphs. Other extremely small pictures were used in place of words in sentences, so that fewer new words were introduced on one page. Larger illustrations, ranging in size from one-fourth

to one-half of a page, represented the ideas or actions of the verbal text. A few pages contained all of the three types of illustration.

Phonic Primer, Part Two

In sharp contrast to readers used earlier in the province, this book contained coloured pictures. The publishers drew attention to this fact by specifying on the cover, "With Coloured Illustrations." No doubt coloured illustrations added to the cost of publishing, and the number of coloured illustrations was limited to eight, ranging in size from one-fourth to one-half of a page. Black and white line-drawings, ranging in size from one-sixth to one-half of a page, together with the coloured illustrations accounted for approximately fourteen per cent of the total text. Most of the pictures were arranged across the top of the page, and were closely related to the verbal text; many of the smaller ones represented the phonetic elements of words.

Book One and Two

While the proportion of illustration to the amount of text differed in these books, the general characteristics of the pictures may be considered at the same time. Many of the pictures were sentimental, by today's

standard, but were clear, well-drawn and suited to the
text. They lacked the extraneous detail that was
characteristic of the books of 1881, but contained
sufficient detail to make the words of the stories ring
true. Unlike modern readers, the pictures contained no
features that would add further knowledge to the written
content. The main object of the illustrations was to
provide interest. Both texts had several coloured
half-tone and many line-cut pictures. The coloured
pictures were somewhat softer in tone than is usual today,
but of good quality and realistic.

Book One contained one full page, two three-quarter
pages, and three other smaller coloured pictures; this
was roughly one-third of the total illustration. In all,
illustration accounted for approximately one-fourth of the
total copy. In Book Two, pictures amounted to about
eighteen per cent of the space, of which, slightly less than
one-half was coloured. No coloured illustration in Book Two
was less than one-half of a page in size.

Imperial Readers

The illustrations in the Imperial Readers were not
intended as teaching devices to the degree noticeable in the
other series. Their primary purpose was to arouse interest
in the reading selections. Most of the pictures were black.

and white line-drawings of realistic quality and with
sufficient detail to relate them to the stories. The
sentimental and extraneous detail, noted in the Canadian
Readers, was missing. Most noteworthy were the pictures
depicting the characters and events of the folk and
fanciful tales, and the nursery rhymes of the first book;
the costumes were true to the time and place of the settings.
When animals were the central characters of fanciful tales,
their personifications were clearly indicated in their
facial expressions. It could be noted that today readers
contain many fanciful tales of animals, but they contain,
also, realistic stories of animals and birds. The modern
stories of animals in their natural habitat are extremely
well-told; the pictures which accompany them provide clear
and true representations of the animals. These pictures
supply details which the limitations of the easy verbal text
cannot begin to provide, and indicate a scientific interest
in nature through careful observation and the recording of
information.

The coloured illustrations of the Imperial Readers
were soft in tone and realistic, but without shading, and
produced by process colour plates. Book One had two half-
pages and one three-quarter page of coloured illustration;
this amount, with the black and white line-drawings,
represented about twenty per cent of the book. Book Two

contained a slightly larger amount of coloured
illustration, with two full pages, one half-page, and two
quarter pages devoted to this medium; all of the pictures
of this text amounted to about fifteen per cent of the
total space. The proportion of illustration in Book Three
was also fifteen per cent, with less than three full pages
devoted to coloured illustration.

Elson-Gray Basic Readers

The amount of illustration in all of the texts of
the Elson-Gray Basic Readers was impressive, but the fact
that every illustration was coloured, marked these readers
apart from those previously analysed. These pictures, were
printed in tints or by process colour plates which must
have greatly increased the cost of publication. The
Pre-Primer had an illustration on every page, most of which
covered half or one-third of a page; these pictures were
placed across the top of the pages. The purpose of the
pictures was two-fold. They were intended to provide
interest in all of the books, but in the Primers, especially,
the picture was part of the story. The vocabulary of the
books was controlled, and as a result, too few words were
introduced at one time to provide sufficient verbal text to
make an interesting and complete narrative for children
beginning to read. Therefore, the pictures supplied the

necessary details; pupils read the pictures as well as the words. Slightly less than one-half of the Pre-Primer was given over to pictures; a little less than one-third of the Primer was illustrated.

In the more advanced books of the series, the illustrations supplemented the text and were inserted for interest. Many of the pictures were large and there were a few of full-page dimension. The amount of the text devoted to illustration was as follows: Book One -- one-third, Book Two -- about one-quarter, Book Three -- slightly less than one-quarter.

Curriculum Foundation Series

All of the readers of the Curriculum Foundation Series are profusely illustrated with realistic, full-coloured pictures. The modern offset printing process is commonly used in the printing of textbooks and is faster and less expensive compared to the former letterpress technique. The result of offset printing is a softness of tones and shades in pictures. It also permits pictures to be printed without margins which makes possible a greater variety in layout. An impression of larger pictures is obtained by running the pictures off the edge of the page -- technically termed "bleeding."

Every page of the Pre-Primers has a large illustration;

no illustration occupying less than half a page. These
pictures serve a vital purpose in the teaching process; it
is the picture which tells the story, while the words
present the conservations of the characters. This is known
as the "talking picture-story" technique. Frequently,
pupils infer from the pictures what is likely to happen in
the story and are encouraged, in this way, to read on with
close attention. Studying the pictures before reading the
text is an important part of most reading lessons. It helps
pupils to form an association between the ideas presented
in the pictures and the vocabulary and concepts presented
in words. The pictures beyond the Primer level do not
appear quite as frequently, but they are large, many of them
from one-third to one-half page in size. The approximate
amount of illustration in the Primer is slightly more than
one-third of the total text; in Book One and both of the
Book Two readers, the amount is one-third; slightly less
than one-fourth is the proportion in two readers at the
Grade three level.

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CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The pattern of reading instruction in Quebec has been traced from 1890 to 1960. The written evidence available does not **de**termine conclusively which methods have predominated. However, four broad periods emerge in which it seems possible to discern particular trends. During the early period under study (1890 - 1910), three highly specialized methods, the alphabet, the phonic, and the word method were current. The second period (1910 - 1930) was marked by the use of the phonic method, advocated in the Memoranda to Teachers of 1907, and in the directive to teachers entitled, "The Mechanics of Reading," issued in 1913. Two years later (1915), a third directive suggested that a combination of the phonic, word, and sentence methods be used. This was also the period during which the Imperial Readers, based on the rhyme and sentence method, were authorized. It was almost inevitable that there would be considerable overlapping of techniques during this time.

We have noted that the four major methods of teaching reading have been practised in Quebec from 1890 - 1930, either singly or in combination. Each of these methods reached a peak of emphasis much earlier in the United States.

The alphabetic method dated back to the colonial period,
and reaction against it began about 1840. Both the word
method and the phonic method had their period of
emphasis before 1900, while the sentence method was popular
from 1908 - 1915. Thus, Quebec seemed uninfluenced by
American reading practices from 1890 - 1930.

It appears that after 1930, there was a tendency to
follow the pattern of American reading instruction. However,
the transition was a gradual one. In Quebec, the third
discernible period (1930 - 1945), was marked by the use of
a wide variety of reading materials, a broader concept of
the place of reading in relation to the curriculum, the
recognition of the importance of silent reading practices,
and great diversity in methods of instruction. It was
during this period of transition that the Elson-Gray Basic
Readers were introduced (1934). These were the first
readers to appear in Quebec with controlled vocabularies,
stories related more closely to children's interests, and
profusely illustrated, reflecting the influences of research
and the broadened aims of reading as outlined by the
National Society for the Study of Education in the Twenty-
fourth Yearbook. The introduction of the new readers led
to some confusion about the place of phonics in the teaching
of reading; some teachers delayed use of phonics until some
skill in reading had been reached through the look-and-say

method; others continued the older practice of stressing the mechanics of reading; however, there was a general awareness that reading instruction should relate more closely to the interests and abilities of the pupils.

The last period of change began in 1945 when the Curriculum Foundation Series was introduced in the province. The eclectic approach to reading, advocated in the guide-books which accompany the texts, is the pattern adopted by most teachers of reading, and is advocated by reading authorities such as, Russell, Gray, and Gates. Furthermore, the revised edition of the Curriculum Foundation Series (1956), currently in use, contains all the refinements of vocabulary control, gradations of difficulty in concepts, provision for gradual development of basic skills and, in fact, is similar to standard series of basal readers used elsewhere.

Methods of teaching reading in Quebec have changed slowly, but perhaps the most noticeable disregard for current theories is in the lack of recognition of the differences of reading abilities among children. Each of the Yearbooks on reading, published since 1925, has clearly defined the need to adapt reading programs to the development of pupils. Grouping of pupils, according to ability, is commonplace, but one finds much evidence of all groups within a class using the same text. Despite the

differences in reading abilities, the adaptation of material
is frequently acknowledged, merely through demands of
different degrees of comprehension, and through more
practice periods for slow readers.

The reading book of 1890 was the center of class
activities, and through the seventy years covered in this
study, the reader has remained the most important text in
the primary grades; however, its purpose and place in
reading instruction has changed. Until the Thirties, the
reader was used to develop reading ability and to provide
instruction in related language areas; the reader was, in
fact, a drill and exercise book. Primers, in particular,
contained unrelated sentences, often meaningless, to
provide drill to suit the current reading method. Today,
the basic reader is perhaps the most important book used in
reading instruction, but it is only part of the vast amount
of material that provides a balanced reading program.

The literary content of readers has changed, partly
in respect to methods and in respect to changes in attitudes
that society wished to induce in its children. The
Canadian Readers (1890 - 1910) contained fables and
narratives of a strongly moral tone as well as selections
of an instructional nature. There was much evidence in
the stories of virtue being rewarded or wickedness deserving
punishment. Later on, in the Imperial Readers, emphasis

was focussed on developing favourable attitudes toward literature; these readers were storehouses of rhymes, folk and fanciful tales. The readers which appeared after 1930 (Elson-Gray Basic Readers and the Curriculum Foundation Series) contained selections more closely related to the interests of children, to the more varied purposes of reading, and to the broader objectives of the reading program; this change was brought about by scientific investigations into the various aspects of reading, and by the interest in child development.

There have been two influences which have determined the vocabulary selection of readers. In the early primers the words were selected to suit the method of teaching reading. Thus, the letters themselves or the sounds of letters were the criteria of selection for the alphabetic or phonic method. With the introduction of the sentence method, rhymes and cumulative folk tales provided the vocabulary of readers. With the development of scientifically prepared word lists, a careful selection for readers was made on the basis of the frequency ratings of words in these lists. At the same time, there was a reduction in the number of different words contained in a reader, and provision for frequent repetition.

In all of the readers analysed in this study, illustrations have served an important educational purpose;

they have been used in association with the verbal text
to promote understanding, and they have served to
stimulate interest. The most apparent change has been in
the more liberal use of illustration and in the replacement
of black and white line-drawings by full-colour pictures.
While one may find the pictures of early texts overly
sentimental by today's standards, nevertheless, it has been
noted in this study that over a seventy-year period, the
quality of illustration has been good, in respect to
pictorial content and printing processes. The more liberal
use of full-colour illustrations in modern texts is probably
as much a result of the technological improvements in the
printing process, and of the competition of publishers to
sell their product, as the investigations into children's
preferences. However, since 1930, children's preferences
for full colour, and for realistic pictures have been much
in evidence.

The control over vocabulary selection, the choice
of stories relating to childhood interests, and the
provision of useful illustration have improved the
readability of texts. Improvements may continue to be made
if further consideration is given to the same aspects of
readability in the future. It appears necessary to
consider that vocabulary lists become obsolete because
of the fast rate at which new words permeate our language

through modern communications. It is through television, particularly, that children are receptive to these new words. Again, the words selected for texts used in this province have not been based on any scientific investigations that have been carried out locally. If significance can be attached to the results of the survey conducted in Montreal schools, as a part of this study, then Montreal children, and probably those in other parts of the province, might benefit from more challenging verbal content in readers. Some consideration should be given, also, to the reading interests of pupils of Quebec. Texts are changed infrequently, and one wonders, even with the newer and improved editions, if texts introduced about fifteen years ago, meet the interests of the children of today. Again, it would appear that television, the wider range of easy-to-read trade books that is available, and the improvement in school libraries must be influencing the reading interests of children. It has been noted, too, that many of the popular library books for primary children contain black and white drawings with one or two predominating primary colours. Frequently, the illustrative media expresses the mood of the story. Fewer full-colour illustrations and some less colourful, but nevertheless realistic drawings, would satisfy pupils just as well, and would lower the cost of textbook publication.

Reading instruction in Quebec from 1890 - 1960 has changed slowly; the changes since 1930 have followed patterns that have been tried in the United States. The reading textbook has become more readable, and it, too, has shown the influences of scientific studies and expert opinions expressed in American publications. The nature of the progress in the reading program in Quebec seems to reflect the general conservatism that prevails in this province.

****

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A - I

MATERIALS AND METHODS OF READING IN QUEBEC: 1890 - 1960

Period	Readers	Methods
1890-1910	Canadian Readers (Gage) Quebec Readers (Gage) Royal Readers (Nelson)	Alphabetic, Phonic, Word
1910-193-	Royal Crown Readers (Nelson) Imperial Readers (Renouf)	Phonic, Word, Sentence
1930-1945	Elson-Gray Basic Readers (Gage) Reading and Thinking (Gage) (Nelson) Highroads to Reading (Gage) (Nelson) Treasury Readers (MacMillan)	Phonic, Word, Sentence
1945-1960	Curriculum Foundation Series (Gage)	Eclectic

FACSIMILE OF A WORK SHEET FOR WORD ANALYSIS

	Series A			Series B				Series C		Series D			Series E		
	P.1	P.2	B.1	P.1	P.2	B.1	B.2	B.1	B.2	P.	B.1	B.2	P.	B.1	B.2
the	168	189	1184	170	496	830	1277	714	783	X			X		
thee			9	1	13	16			1						
their	1	10	55	10	66	84		7	18		X				X
them		15	76	8	25	69	82	32	37	X				X	
themselves		1	5		1	1	5								
then	2	10	72	15	28	60	62	9	74	X				X	
there		14	61	5	16	82	88	21	45	X			X		
therefore			2				2								
there's								4							
these		3	16		4	14	22		5			X			X
they	1	62	116	1	56	146	178	77	94	X			X		
they'll					1	1		5							
they're		1	1		3	1									
they've			3												
thick			8			3	5		2		X				
Total of Different Words	4	9	13	7	11	12	9	8	9						
Total Words	172	305	1608	210	709	1307	1721	869	1059						

Series

A Canadian Readers
B Royal Crown Readers
C Imperial Readers
D Elson-Gray Basic Readers
E Curriculum Foundation Series

Books

P. Primer
P.1 First Primer
P.2 Second Primer
B.1 Book One
B.2 Book Two

APPENDIX B - II

Worksheet for Application of the Spache
Readability Formula for Grades 1-3.

Title .... Date ....
Author .... Publisher ....

	Page... From... To.....	Page... From... To.....	Page... From... To.....	Page... From... To.....
1. Number words	....	....	....	....
2. Number sentences	....	....	....	....
3. Number words not on Dale 769 Easy Words List	....	....	....	....
4. Average sentence Length (Divide 1 by 2)	....	....	....	....
5. Dale score (Divide 3 by 1, multiply by 100)	....	....	....	....
6. Multiply (4) by .141	....	....	....	....
7. Multiply Dale score (5) by .086	....	....	....	....
8. Constant	.839	.839	.839	.839
9. Estimated grade placement (Add 6, 7, and 8)	....	....	....	....

Average grade placement of .... samples ....

Analyzed by ....
Date ....

PROCEDURE

1. Count off about 100 words in the first few pages of the book.
2. Begin count at the beginning of a sentence and end with the last word of the sentence in which the 100th word occurs. Enter number of words in No. 1 above.
3. Count number of sentences in entire sample. Enter number of sentences in No. 2 above.
4. Determine how many words in the selection are not in the Dale list. Write this number under No. 3 above.
5. Divide number of words (No. 1) by number of sentences (No. 2). Enter answer in No. 4 above.
6. Divide number of words not on Dale list by number of words (No. 3 by No. 1). Multiply answer by 100 by moving decimal point two places to right. Enter answer in No. 5, Dale score above.

7. Multiply figure entered opposite No. 4 by .141. Enter under No. 6 above.
8. Multiply figure entered opposite No. 5 by .086. Enter under No. 7 above.
9. Add figures entered opposite No. 6, No. 7 and .839.
10. The sum is an estimate of the grade level of difficulty of the reading selection.
11. Repeat entire procedure, steps 1 to 10, twice more with samples from middle and rear of book.
12. Determine average grade placement by adding the three estimates and dividing by 3. This is the final estimate of the grade level of difficulty of the entire book. Drop last figures or ound them off, as 2.367 = 2.4. This figure designates a book as being equal in difficulty to readers commonly used in the fourth month of the second grade.

APPENDIX B - III

FACSIMILE OF A LETTER REQUESTING ASSISTANCE OF SCHOOLS

22nd November 1962

Mr. ----------,
------------ School,
------------, Que.

Dear Mr. -------:

    At present I am preparing a paper on the readability of textbooks and ask your cooperation in securing information for this research.

    For this study I have selected several readers that have been used in Montreal schools and have applied a readability formula to samplings from them. I would like to compare the objective results of my findings with the classroom teachers' judgment of the materials, as applied to their own pupils.

    Would you assist me with this project by asking your teachers from Grades one to seven to use the materials that I have enclosed?

    I hope that the work involved will not prove too much of an extra burden for you and your staff.

    It would be appreciated if the score sheets could be returned to me by December 7th.

                Yours sincerely,

                Franga Stinson,
                Lecturer in Education,
                Institute of Education,
                Macdonald College.

APPENDIX B - IV

FACSIMILE OF INSTRUCTION TO TEACHERS

To the classroom teacher:

May I ask your cooperation in assisting with some research that is underway concerning the readability of textbooks.

The paragraphs enclosed are taken from reading texts that have been in use in Montreal schools, and I would like your judgment of the difficulty of them, by having three of your pupils attempt to read them.

The directions follow:

1. Select three of your pupils whom you consider to be of average ability in reading.

2. Have each pupil begin with the first paragraph and read orally each paragraph in turn until the reading becomes too difficult. A paragraph is considered too difficult when more than five mistakes have been made.

3. If five or less mistakes are made in a paragraph, credit the pupil with a check mark (^{V}) on the score sheet, in the appropriate place.

4. Work with each child separately, so that no benefit is derived from hearing others read the same material.

5. It is advisable to mark the score sheet as inconspicuously as possible, as pupils may become too interested in the ratings. This may prove distracting to the task in hand.

Thank you very much for your help.

Franga Stinson.

S C O R E   S H E E T

Grade _____

Paragraph Number		Pupil Rating

Paragraph Number   **Pupil Rating**

1.   1st. pupil _____
                                2nd. pupil _____
                                3rd. pupil _____

2.   1st. pupil _____
                                2nd. pupil _____
                                3rd. pupil _____

3.   1st. pupil _____
                                2nd. pupil _____
                                3rd. pupil _____

4.   1st. pupil _____
                                2nd. pupil _____
                                3rd. pupil _____

5.   1st. pupil _____
                                2nd. pupil _____
                                3rd. pupil _____

6.   1st. pupil _____
                                2nd. pupil _____
                                3rd. pupil _____

7.   1st. pupil _____
                                2nd. pupil _____
                                3rd. pupil _____

8.   1st. pupil _____
                                2nd. pupil _____
                                3rd. pupil _____

9.   1st. pupil _____
                                2nd. pupil _____
                                3rd. pupil _____

10.   1st. pupil _____
                                2nd. pupil _____
                                3rd. pupil _____

1.

1. Dick ran home.
   He saw his red hen.
   "Oh, Red Hen," he said.
   "Can you help me?
   I must have one egg.
   I want to get a valentine."
   Dick looked in the nest.
   He found one egg.
   "Thank you, Red Hen," he said.
   "Now I can get the valentine."
   Away he ran to the store.
   "Here is the egg," he said.
   "And here is the valentine," said the man.

2. "Tell me about this strange beast," said Mother Mouse.
   Squeaky said, "He has a long, sharp nose and a queer
   red chin that shakes when he walks. He looked very
   fierce.
   "Oh, my! How he frightened me!"
   Mother Mouse thought and thought.   What animal could
   that be? It must be some terrible beast that she had
   never seen. But Squeaky went on talking.
   "He has something red on top of his head , and he has
   only two legs. He made a terrible noise. Cock-a-doodle-
   do!
   "I ran away!"
   Then Mother Mouse laughed so hard that she almost cried.

3. "Father, Tom said I was not worth my salt. What did he
   mean?"
   "Well, dear, I hope no one will ever be able to say that
   of you again. A girl who is not worth such a cheap thing
   as salt, is not worth very much.
   "But for all that we could not do without salt any more
   than I could do without you." And he drew his little
   girl closer to him.
   "No one will grow big and strong who does not have salt
   in his food. Even animals need it. Farmers often put a
   lump of salt in the fields for the horses.

4. In the meantime the ship had reached a town in Africa.
   The king of the place heard of the ship. He sent his
   men to ask the captain to dine with him and the
   Queen.
   A grand feast was set out. But as soon as the food
   was put on the tables, crowds of mice came out of
   their holes, and ate most of it.
   The captain asked the king to let him fetch Dick's
   cat. He felt sure that puss would soon get rid of the
   rats and mice.

2

5. Knowing that they could not keep up with the dog, the
   farmer and the Indian waited at the house till he should
   return. To the poor father and mother the time seemed
   very long, but in about an hour the dog came running
   back wagging his tail, and looking very happy.
   "There," said the Indian; "he has found the child. Let us
   go with him now."
   The dog led the way; and they soon found the poor child,
   almost dead with cold and hunger, lying under some
   bushes. He was carried home by his father, and soon got
   quite strong again.

6. And the sly fox said, "Come here, Wee Robin, and I
   will let you see the bonny white spot on the tip of
   my tail."
   But Wee Robin said, "No, no, Sly Fox; you caught the
   wee lamb, but you shall not catch me."
   Wee Robin flew away till he came to the bonny brook-
   side.
   And there he saw a naughty boy sitting, throwing stones
   at the birds.
   And the boy said, "Where are you going, Wee Robin?"
   And the Wee Robin said, "I am going to the king's daughter,
   to sing a song for her.

7. A crow one day stole a piece of cheese and flew away
   with it to a branch of a tree, where he could devour
   it in peace. A fox saw him, and make up his mind to get
   the cheese from him. But he could not climb the tree,
   and, even if he could, the crow would have flown away
   long before the fox could have got near him. Being unable,
   then, to get the cheese by open force, he thought he
   would try a trick. So he stole up quickly to the foot
   of the tree, sat down there..........

8. It is very hard to describe the plumage of the
   humming-bird, because the colours of its head
   and breast change with every change of its position.
   In this respect it is like a larger bird of the same
   class found in Australia, and called, on account of
   its great beauty, the bird of paradise. The humming-
   bird is often killed and stuffed to be used as an
   ornament for ladies' head-dresses; but it loses, after
   death, a great deal of the brightness which makes its
   plumage so beautiful in life. The humming-bird can be
   tamed by kind and careful treatment.

3.

9. Iron is what is called a metal; and of all the metals,
   it is the most useful to man – **far** more useful than gold
   or silver, or copper or tin. While being the most useful,
   iron is fortunately also the most common of all the metals,
   being found almost everywhere. A long time ago, people
   knew nothing of iron or its uses, and they made all their
   tools and weapons out of stone or bone or wood; then they
   found out copper and tin, and made for themselves lances,
   knives, hatchets, and needles.

10. Once upon a time, ages ago, when the castles on the
    river Rhine were inhabited by barons and their men-at-
    arms, a tower in the midst of the river was erected by
    a wicked and powerful chief named Count Graaf, for the
    purpose of exacting tolls from every one who passed up
    or down the Rhine. If a boat or barge dared to go by
    without drawing up to the tower to pay a toll, the
    warders on the top of the battlements had orders to
    shoot with cross-bows at the voyager, and either oblige
    him to draw nigh, or kill him for daring to pass with-
    out paying.