PHONICS AS AN AID
TO TEACHING FIRST GRADE READING

A THESIS

SUBMITTED TO THE DEPARTMENT OF

EDUCATION AND THE GRADUATE COUNCIL OF THE KANSAS STATE

TEACHERS COLLEGE OF EMPORIA IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF

THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

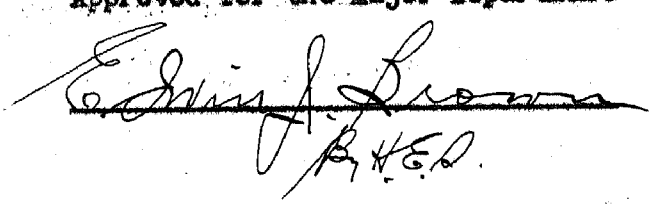
MASTER OF SCIENCE

BY

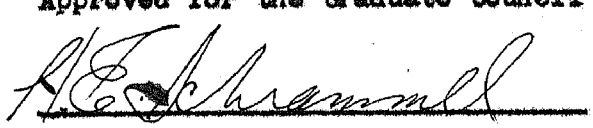
AILEEN HENRIETTA BROWN

JUNE 1939

Approved for the Major Department



Approved for the Graduate Council



ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The writer wishes to express most sincerely and most directly her appreciation to Dr. Edwin J. Brown, Director of the Graduate Division of the Kansas State Teachers College of Emporia, who so kindly directed this study.

To my mother, Mrs. Celia Brown, and my father, the late Mr. Charles Brown, appreciation is also expressed for the encouragement and aid received.

A. H. B.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

The Nature of the Study

Conflicting opinions regarding the teaching of phonics as an aid to reading have prevailed for a number of years. The first-grade teacher is especially concerned with phonics as to the value of it in the curriculum. Many authorities state that phonic training should not be given during the first year of school; others think that it should be taught as a very necessary method in forming the foundation of reading. Some authorities believe that this training should be given to all children according to their needs. Another question which confronts the first-grade teacher is that, if phonics is taught, should a special period on the daily program be devoted to it or should it be taught during the regular reading period?

The phonic method of reading is old in principle. Ickelsamer,[1] a German, was the originator of this method in 1534. He associated letters with animals and pictures that represented characteristic sounds of letters. Ickelsamer's method was elaborated by the Jansenites, Buno, Rousseau, Basedow, Pestalozzi, and by still others in the Port Royal Schools.[2] After this it was long neglected but was introduced again in 1790 by Thorton. The A B C

---

[1] Edmund Burke Huey, "Present-Day Methods and Tests in Elementary Reading," Ch. V in The History and Pedagogy of Reading (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1915), p. 71.

[2] Paul Klapper, Teaching Children to Read (D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1916), p. 39.

method[3] was substituted for the phonic method about 1840. From about 1870 to the latter part of the nineteenth century the phonic method was used extensively in this country, but the technique was almost completely abandoned during the first quarter of this century.[4] After the introduction into America, the method of teaching employed was usually to have the child separately sound each letter by imitating the teacher. The teacher would exaggerate the enunciation of the sounds by showing the position of the lips, teeth, and tongue. Later the children were told stories having the sounds of letters to represent animals and objects in order to appeal to the interest of the child. Smith[5] gives the steps in the phonic method as it is generally taught now:

1. Giving ear training through rhymes.
2. Giving eye and voice training through blackboard and flash card exercises.
3. Aiding the child to generalize the sounds from known words.

Smith[6] says again,

> Some teachers give incidental reference to phonetics in general lessons, and provide definite practice only to groups, or individuals in special need of help in attacking new words; some teach no phonetics; and others go to the extreme of teaching phonetics intensively to the class as a whole.

There is every reason to believe that from the time that phonics was

---

[3] Emmett Albert Betts, The Prevention and Correction of Reading Difficulties (Row, Peterson and Company, Evanston, Illinois, 1936), p. 209.

[4] William Henry Pyle, Psychology of Common Branches (The Maple Press Company, York, Pennsylvania, 1930), p. 45.

[5] Nila Banton Smith, American Reading Instruction (Silver Burdett and Company, New York, 1934), p. 271f.

[6] Ibid., p. 272.

introduced into America it has been a major problem for primary teachers.

The Problem

The purpose of this study is to weigh and examine the possibilities of phonics in the light of the consequences in first-grade reading. In the study phonics will be considered according to its present status; arguments for and against using phonics excessively will be reviewed; advantages and the disadvantages will be evaluated.

Previous Studies

Arthur I. Gates[7] made a survey in 1925 and 1926 in twenty-one school systems to find the present status of phonics, how and when it was presented in the schools. This survey and the findings will be referred to later.

Harry L. Tate[8] experimented with two groups, phonics and no phonics, to determine how silent reading is influenced by phonics. The experiment lasted for eight weeks. The way this was carried out and the results will be stated in this study.

An experiment was conducted by Gates and Russell[9] in New York City. They worked with three groups of children giving each a different type of phonic training to determine which was the most helpful for young children.

---

[7] Arthur I. Gates, "Problems in Beginning Reading," Teachers College Record (Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City, September 1924-June 1925), vol. 26:572-591.

[8] Harry L. Tate, "The Influence of Phonics on Silent Reading in Grade I," Elementary School Journal (The University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, June 1937), p. 752ff.

[9] Arthur I. Gates and David H. Russell, "Types of Materials, Vocabulary Burden, Word Analysis, and Other Factors in Beginning Reading," Elementary School Journal (The University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, September, 1938), p. 27ff.

The details of this experiment will be explained in the third chapter.

A study, Phonics or No Phonics, was made by Currier and Duguid[10] in 1916 with first-grade children to determine which procedure would give better results in reading. This experiment continued for five years. The beneficial results of this study will be discussed later.

An experiment was conducted in Newark by Sexton and Herron[11] to find out whether phonic training is more advantageous to young children than no phonic training. The writer will discuss this experiment later.

Wilson, Flemming, Burke, and Garrison[12] worked with kindergarten, first, second, and third-grade children for a period of four years. This study was to determine the child's readiness for reading. One hundred six measures and appraisals were obtained of each child's scholastic, physical, psychological, and social aspects of his development. This study will be explained by the writer later.

Unsicker and Flemming[13] made a study of remedial instruction as it is carried out in the Horace Mann School with elementary and high school students. This study refers to the lack of phonic training causing a difficulty in word pronunciation. This will be discussed in the fourth chapter.

Several conclusions from studies that have been made will be referred to occasionally.

---

10 Lillian Beatrice Currier and Olive C. Duguid, "Phonics or No Phonics," Elementary School Journal (September 1922-June 1923), p. 286ff.

11 Elmer K. Sexton and John S. Herron, "The Newark Public Experiment," Elementary School Journal (September 1927-June 1928), p. 690ff.

12 Frank T. Wilson, Cecile White Flemming, Agnes Burke, and Charlotte G. Garrison, "Reading Readiness in Kindergarten and Primary Grades," Elementary School Journal (February, 1938), p. 442ff.

13 Cecilia E. Unsicker and Cecile White Flemming, "Remedial Instruction and Aid to Effective Study," Teachers College Record (Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, vol. XXXIV, October 1932-May 1933), p. 407f.

The Scope of the Study

The analysis of phonics as it has been used in relation to first-grade reading is undertaken in this study. The Courses of Study were taken from state courses and from first-class cities in the United States. Manuals from first-grade readers and primers were used. The opinions of experts in the field of reading have received much attention.

From the study, it is evident that phonics is commonly used as an aid to first-grade reading. It is found that formal phonics should be presented after sixty to a hundred words are taught. Ear and voice training precede the formal work. In the opinions of most authorities a special period is devoted to this aid.

Method of Procedure

This study has been made in an attempt to determine whether phonics serves as an aid to the teaching of first-grade reading. It has been a question in the minds of authorities in reading as to how much phonics should be taken up during the first year of a child's experience in school and what steps should be taken in presenting this aid. The writer has attempted to bring into view some of the questions which were suggested by the study. The most important questions are listed:

1. What are the views of the leading authorities in this field?
2. When should phonics be presented?
3. What steps should be taken up first?
4. What are the advantages to be derived from phonics?
5. Should phonics be taken up during the child's first year of experience in school?

6. How much phonics should be taught in the first year?

7. What are the disadvantages resulting from phonic training?

8. What precautions should be taken in teaching phonics?

9. What conclusions have been drawn from experiments?

10. Should all children be given the same amount of phonics?

11. Is phonics the only desirable method of word analysis?

12. Is reading the only subject which is aided by phonic training?

13. Can phonics be used in analyzing all words?

14. Should phonics be presented at a separate time or during the reading period?

15. What is the status of phonics at the present time?

16. What are the results from an overemphasis of phonics?

Sources of Data

The greater part of the data was taken from books, yearbooks, magazines, and journals. Other information was gathered from pamphlets, reading manuals, and courses of study.

Types of Data Collected

The types of data collected from the many sources are:

1. Frequency of phonics in the courses of study.

2. Presentation and frequency of phonics in reading manuals.

3. Opinions of men in the reading field as to the beneficial and non-beneficial results to be obtained.

4. Relation of phonics to reading.

5. Current views regarding this subject.

6. Steps to be taken to make this aid most profitable.

7. Results of experiments in this field.

Definition of Terms

Phonics and Phonetics. A distinction is not clearly made between the terms phonics and phonetics. The writer prefers to think of phonetics as the diacritical marking of words and phonics as referring to the study of sounds. So the term phonics will be used exclusively in this study.

Phonogram. A phonogram is a written representation of a speech sound (r, t, l, er, ang, ad).

Blend. A blend is a combination of speech sounds which are used to produce words (sh, st, bl, cl).

Initial letters. Initial letters are first names or double first names in words (m, b, s, f, c, ch, sl, br).

Family. A family is a term used for the endings of words (at, an, ed, ing, un).

Presentation of Data

The writer has presented the data in the discussion form. Conclusions and recommendations have been drawn by making comparisons and from the data herein presented by the writer.

CHAPTER II

THE PRESENT STATUS OF PHONICS

About two decades ago, the phonic method was used almost exclusively in the schools as a means of teaching. It claimed the larger portion of time and much emphasis was laid upon it during the first two years of the child's experience in school. Gates[1] said:

> The whole course of study was often organized around phonetics as a pivot; the vocabularies were largely selected to complete the system of phonetic families; the drill devices were for phonetic work; and not infrequently reading for the thought of the material--if, indeed, it contained an idea--was secondary to accurate pronunciation of words.

Cabell[2] states that phonics was devised to help children form a system of grouping words, and it assisted in teaching useful parts of words. For example, if the child was acquainted with the letter "s" it helped him in making out words in which "s" occurred.

In 1925 and 1926 phonic training was very important and was of major concern to authors of reading courses for primary grades, and to the primary teachers. A survey was made in 1925 by Gates[3] in twenty-one well known school systems. He found that phonics was the most widely accepted method for the teaching of reading that was used by American teachers. The teachers in all of these systems utilized this device. Seventeen of the systems in-

---

[1] Arthur I. Gates, New Methods in Primary Reading (Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City, 1926), p. 32.

[2] Elvira D. Cabell, "Status of Phonics Today" III, Chicago School Journal (Board of Education Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1932), p. 253f.

[3] Arthur I. Gates, "Problems in Beginning Reading," Teachers College Record (Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City), vol. 28:572-591.

troduced it within six weeks. Some of the courses provided for an unusually large amount of time for drill. It was found that the phonograms taught were those beginning with a vowel, such as, "s-at" and "br-ing." This practice was nearly universal because nineteen out of twenty-one books used this system, even though the divisions were difficult. The sounds were unnatural such as "c(u)-ake" and "(e)r-at." Another method which was favored by some at that time seemed to be more natural. It taught phonics in this way, "ha-t" and "ba-t." The tendency has been to adopt one system or the other, but Gates[4] thinks that perhaps the result would have been more profitable if both systems had been used.

Dolch and Bloomster[5] think that the words in school books demand some kind of phonic attack or independence in recognizing them. These men say that the child must follow some form or have some knowledge for the recognition of words. From an experiment it was found that phonic readiness comes later than the six-year mental age; it comes about the seven-year mental age, and seldom does much advantage come from phonics being taught earlier. Many children six years old have a mental age of seven; so the first-grade child is many times mentally ready for phonic instruction. Dolch and Bloomster do not say when formal phonic training should begin, but they do say that ear training in phonics and similarities in words may begin early.

During these earlier years a few adequate studies, like those of Carleton W. Washburne with Emma Jaycox and Mabel Vogel, had been made criti-

---

[4] Ibid., p. 578.

[5] E. W. Dolch and Maurine Bloomster, "Phonic Readiness," The Elementary School Journal (The University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, November, 1937), p. 201ff.

cising the method, but the teaching of phonics went on as it had done before. At this time a report was made by Gray[6] in which he stressed some important points. He claimed that the conditions under which experiments were conducted were not controlled, therefore making the studies unreliable. The results obtained then may have been due to the intellectual capacity of the pupils, skill of the teachers, or other varying conditions.

Since reading is such an essential subject, and phonics has been used so extensively, Cabell[7] states seven problems in the field of phonics at that time and six of these are still uninvestigated. They are:

1. Frequency of occurrence of all important phonetic elements and of various combinations in which they occur, based on a word list, shows frequency of words in common use in primary reading materials.*
2. Difficulty in teaching various elements.
3. Relative merits of different elements and combinations in unlocking words.
4. Time at which different elements or combimations of elements should be introduced.
5. Amount of training needed by different types of pupils.
6. Conditions under which training can be introduced to best advantage.
7. Methods most effective in group instruction and with different types of individuals.

---

[6] William S. Gray, "The Development of a Meaningful Vocabulary and of Independence in Word Recognition," Ch. IV in The Twenty-Fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I (Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Illinois, 1925), p. 86f.

[7] Elvira D. Cabell, "Status of Phonics Today" I, Chicago School Journal, vol. 14:370-373.

* Cabell states this as a problem, but the writer believes this is a guide for phonic elements which are taught rather than a problem.

In 1930 there was also a lack of agreement among teachers and the first out of the seven problems is the only one satisfactorily answered. The real problem in reading today is to find a way of helping children become independent readers without impairing their speed, rate of comprehension, or pleasure derived from reading. This problem must be solved by investigation.

There was an experiment conducted by Tate[8] in the Whitney School in Chicago, Illinois, with first-grade pupils to find out how phonics influenced silent reading when there is a special period devoted to it. The experimental group was given thirty minutes of phonic training. The control group was given no phonics but thirty minutes to balance the experimental group. This time consisted of drill work. The results as given from the Gates Primary Reading Test, Type I, was that phonics is superior to the "look-and-say" method in word recognition. Type II of this test caused conclusions to be drawn that phonics is inferior to the "look-and-say" and also in comprehension. Type III gave the same results as Type II. Thirty minutes was found to be too long a period to be devoted to phonic training. Tate drew these conclusions:

(1) Regular periods for phonic instruction and drill are not desirable.

(2) Phonics should be used by the pupil as a tool and not as subject matter to be mastered for its own value.

(3) Overemphasis on phonics hinders rapidity and thoroughness of comprehension.

It is stated by Pennell and Cusack[9] that not enough scientific investi-

---

8 Harry L. Tate, "The Influence of Phonics on Silent Reading in Grade I," Elementary School Journal, June 1937, p. 752ff.

9 Mary E. Pennell and Alice M. Cusack, "Specific Helps for the Kindergarten and First Grade," Ch. VI in The Teaching of Reading for Better Living (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1935), p. 89.

gations have been made up to the present time to establish the relationship that exists between reading efficiency and phonics. Phonics has been largely subordinated. The excessive amount of time contributed to the teaching of phonics in the past has influenced many against it. Pernell and Cusack warn that caution must be used at the present time, after all of the criticism that phonics is undergoing, that the pendulum does not swing too far in the other extreme and discard phonics altogether. They say that it may be a useful tool, and if used intelligently may prove an asset rather than a liability in reading instruction. Prominent men in this field such as Professor Ernest Horn of the University of Iowa, Professor Arthur Gates at Columbia University, and Dean W. S. Gray of the University of Chicago, are not extremists on either side. They all admit that there is some value in this form of drill.

Gunderson[10] believes that formal phonic work should be correlated with the reading program and only drilled upon as the child discovers similarities.

Most experts feel, however, that phonics as taught now should undergo great modifications. Many of the new manuals have decreased the amount of time allotted to this subject. They have broken up set procedures and have encouraged other forms of drill for word recognition.

In the Manual for Happy Road to Reading,[11] phonics is one of the three methods of word recognition used. When phonics is taught, ear training should be the first step and formal phonics should not begin until after sev-

---

10 Agnes G. Gunderson, "Simplified Phonics," The Elementary School Journal, 1939, p. 595.

11 Katharine E. Dopp, May Pitts, and S. C. Garrison, Happy Road to Reading (Rand McNally and Company, Chicago, 1935), p. 27ff.

enty words have been learned.

The Teacher's Manual to accompany The Children's Own Readers by Pennell and Cusack[12] advocates the use of phonics along with other methods for word recognition. The manual provides help for the teaching of this subject and suggests that it be taught at a distinct period from reading.

The Elson-Gray Manual[13] takes up phonics with other methods to teach the recognition of words. In this book consonant sounds should be presented within the first few weeks of school.

The Beacon Readers[14] present parallel work in phonics and reading. A phonetic chart is suggested for the teacher who uses these books. By the end of the first week some of the sounds should be learned.

The Child's Own Way Series Manual[15] makes the teaching of phonics optional. Five stages of reading are given, and if phonics is taught it should begin at the third stage or the tenth or eleventh week of school. A special time apart from the reading period should be devoted to it.

Hahn's Manual accompanying the Child Development Readers[16] says there is no agreement on the amount of phonics that should be taught or the best method of teaching it. It is agreed in this manual that phonics should be taught when needed by the child and when the child can read with appreciation and understanding. Hahn says that pronunciation and enunciation are the im-

---

12 Mary E. Pennell and Alice M. Cusack, The Children's Own Readers (Ginn and Company, Boston, 1929), p. ix, 280ff.

13 William H. Elson, Lura E. Runkel, William S. Gray, The Elson Basic Readers Primer (Scott, Foresman and Company, Chicago, 1930), p. 43.

14 James H. Fassett and Charles H. Norton, Beacon Readers (Ginn and Company, Chicago, 1922), p. 20f, 50ff.

15 Marjorie Hardy, The Child's Own Way Series (Wheeler Publishing Company, Chicago, 1931), p. 40f.

16 Julia Letheld Hahn, Child Development Readers (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1935), p. XXVIIIff.

mediate aims of phonics. In the manual emphasis is placed on functional phonics which lead children to discriminate sounds in words and to apply these sounds to the appropriate part of the word.

Child-Story Readers[17] begin with the formal teaching of phonics after the child can recognize at sight a number of fundamental words. Preliminary phonic instruction should be given in the form of ear-training for a five-minute period daily.

In the New Winston Reader[18] a system of phonics based upon sound investigations runs through the book. The Manual states that it is generally acknowledged that one of the greatest aids to independent reading power is the use of phonics. Firman and Gehres[19] say:

> . . . The general plan of the phonic system of the Winston Method is to make the pupils mechanically independent at the end of the third school year so that they may then be qualified to begin the study of the dictionary.

This method advises the postponing of formal phonics until "The Little Red Hen" story can be appreciated. The advanced groups may take it up sooner, and the slower groups should study phonics later. Drill is most essential for the slower groups, although they are longer being prepared for the introduction of the subject.

Gunderson[20] observed carefully ten reading manuals published within the last ten years and found that the number of initial phonograms to be taught in grades I and II ranged from twelve to fifty-four. This did not

---

17 Eleanor M. Johnson, Child-Story Readers (Lyons and Company, Chicago, 1927), p. 88.

18 Sidney G. Firman and Ethel Maltby Gehres, The New Winston First Reader (The John C. Winston Company, Chicago, 1928), p. iiff.

19 Ibid., p. 2B.

20 Agnes G. Gunderson, op. cit., p. 595ff.

include any blends. There should only be a few phonograms taught, he thinks. These should occur often in the child's reading in order to make reading an easy task. (Gunderson thinks that the teaching of phonics should be simplified, and it may be simplified by teaching only letter phonics along with context clues.) He does not say how many phonograms should be taught, but says that perhaps ten is enough, not including blends, suffixes, and prefixes, and words.

Several Courses of Study of states and cities were scrutinized to find the extent phonics was used in their school systems. The Kansas Course of Study[21] does not say that phonics shall be taught as a special subject, but the pupils are expected to know consonant combinations and the common vowel sounds.

The Long Beach Course of Study[22] states that phonics shall be taught as a method along with many others.

The Richmond, Virginia, Course of Study[23] states that phonics shall be taught along with other methods in order to acquire the ability of attacking new words.

Phonics is given a definite place in solving word difficulties in Los Angeles.[24]

One of the objectives of the Atlantic City Course of Study[25] is the mastery of phonics. (Phonics has a definite place in the school curriculum

---

21 Kansas Course of Study, p. 12.

22 Long Beach, California, Course of Study, p. 80.

23 Richmond, Virginia, Course of Study, p. 6.

24 Los Angeles Course of Study, p. 32ff.

25 Atlantic City Course of Study, p. 9ff.

as a tool for the child to acquire independence in reading. No definite work is given in phonics until the children have attained some power of word recognition.

In Arizona[26] a specific course in phonics is given.

The Course of Study of South Dakota[27] has definite steps in phonics for each six weeks:

> First six weeks--Ear training in phonics is begun.
>
> Second six weeks--Phonic work that is needed by specific groups is begun.
>
> Third six weeks--The work should be continued according to the needs of the pupils.
>
> Fourth six weeks--same as above.
>
> Fifth six weeks--Same as above. "If your school is following a particular manual in phonics it is best to gauge your work as outlined in manual."
>
> Sixth six weeks--"Phonics to suit need of the pupils."

This Course of Study states that phonics should be used as an aid to word recognition, and the formal steps should be deferred until the children have a little knowledge of sight words. Ear training should precede eye training, and drill should be interesting, short, and varied.

Trenton, New Jersey, Course of Study[28] believes that phonics should be studied during the reading lesson and should be taught and not left to chance. It is taken up in the early primer period and is given in the kindergarten through the reading of rhymes. The first requisite is ear-training in order to make the ear sensitive to word similarities.

---

[26] Arizona Course of Study, p. 3.

[27] South Dakota Course of Study, pp. 1-60.

[28] Trenton Course of Study, p. 35f.

The Oklahoma City Course of Study[29] gives a special period for the study of phonics. Ear training precedes the formal steps. After the pupils begin to notice similarities and differences in words they may take up formal phonics.

Phonics is used in the Denver, Colorado,[30] schools as an effective tool to aid the slow children in analyzing new words.

Stone[31] says that in the past the training of the child has depended too largely upon the knowledge and analytical sounding of word parts; the child often failed in blending the parts into the known whole and this interfered with comprehension clues. It is believed now that one-syllable words should not be analyzed and then blended but should be visual and mental. This should aid the child in his pronunciation of the word.

It is believed by Pennell and Cusack[32] that phonics should not be used as exclusively as it was about ten or twelve years ago, since it is such a slow process of identification. They say, "Furthermore, if a child becomes too conscious of minute details of a word, meaning is often overlooked and reading becomes a mechanical word-calling process."

It was found by Gates and Boeber[33] that during study children observed the length of words and used this as a means to help in recognition. Words

---

[29] Oklahoma City Course of Study, p. 75ff.

[30] Denver Course of Study, p. 87.

[31] Clarence R. Stone, Better Primary Reading (Webster Publishing Company, St. Louis, Missouri, 1936), p. 400f.

[32] Mary C. Pennell and Alice M. Cusack, op. cit., p. 89f.

[33] Arthur I. Gates and Eloise Boeker, "A Study of Initial Stages in Reading by Pre-School Children," Teachers College Record, 1925, vol. 24, pp. 436-477.

of the same length were recognized by some outstanding peculiarity or detail, such as "box" by the "x," "pig" by the dotted "i," and "window" by the "w" at the beginning and end.

In selecting the phonograms to be taught the most common practice some years ago was to limit the training in phonics to the lists in the manual which accompanied the basic reader used. At present the total reading experience of the children is analyzed, and the frequencies of the most needed phonograms are taught.

The tendencies toward the teaching of phonics today is much different from the old method used. Cabell[34] summarizes these eight points:

1. To place phonetic training in a group of methods for securing word mastery, which include
   (a) Incorporation of training in word perception with reading interesting material for its content,
   (b) Encouragement of children to use many methods of detecting similarities and differences in word forms, such as single letters, special peculiarities, general conformation, non-syllabic groups, words within words,
2. To select phonetic elements for teaching by their utility in assisting the children to decipher words of their vocabulary as determined by investigation,
3. To arrange the order of symbols to be taught, not by the classifications of phonetics, but by
   (a) Frequency of occurrence in children's reading,
   (b) Difficulties encountered by the children,
4. To postpone introduction of distinctively phonetic training,
5. To feature oral phonics in the early stages of instruction,
6. To decrease the amount of training in analysis of sounds,

---

[34] Elvira D. Cabell, "Status of Phonics Today II," Chicago School Journal, 1932, vol. 13:430-434.

7. To vary the amount of training as well as the methods of approach according to diagnosed reading needs of the children,

8. To dispense with phonetic training altogether where it does not appear to function properly.

At the present time, the teaching of phonics is permissible in school systems, with some schools devoting a special period for this form of drill. Among Courses of Study and reading manuals consulted, none were unfavorable to the use of this tool. Most of the recent authorities suggest that phonics be taught along with other methods for the recognition of words.

CHAPTER III

ARGUMENTS AGAINST USING PHONICS EXCESSIVELY

Many objections are raised against the teaching of phonics in the first two primary grades. There are many authorities who say that the teaching of this subject has disadvantages. O'Brien[1] warns that phonic training has been overdone by too much stress being placed on mechanics, word forms, and sounds. The meaning side of phonics is therefore neglected. This causes reading to become monotonous and dull or "word-calling" in oral reading and "defective interpretation" in silent reading.

Authorities agree that if phonics is treated in too much detail it will become a science in itself instead of an aid to reading. This detailed treatment should be avoided. "It has been proved that excessive attention to phonetic analysis as the only means of identifying words has caused special types of difficulty in reading."[2] When children become too word-conscious they lose the ability to see the whole word by giving their attention to dissecting the word parts. One of the chief criticisms of the teaching of phonics, Dickson[3] thinks, is that children have little or no use for it in comparison to the amount of time spent in teaching this subject and in the learning of phonic elements and skills.

---

[1] John Anthony O'Brien, "Reading Difficulties, Their Diagnosis and Remedial Treatment by Clinical Method," Ch. IX in Reading, Its Psychology and Pedagogy (The Century Company, New York, 1926), pp. 222-223.

[2] Mary E. Pennell, and Alice M. Cusack, How to Teach Reading (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1923), p. 206f.

[3] Virgil E. Dickson, Classroom Teacher (Ginn and Company, Boston, 1929), p. 432.

McKee[4] says:

> . . . The real crudity of the alphabetic method led to the use of the so-called phonic method. Here the emphasis was placed upon the memorizing of the elementary sounds of the letters rather than their names.

The three methods, alphabetic, phonic, and phonetic, McKee[5] states, do not help in the introduction of reading nor do they help the child in getting thought from his reading. A fault to be found with these is that they do not use the child's past experience in any way.

Cabell[6] in his article on "Status of Phonics" states the case against phonics:

1. It is not based on sufficient and adequately controlled experimentation.
2. It is based on imperfect conception of the "phonetic" character of the English language.
3. It is out of harmony with what is known of the laws of learning.
4. It develops habits counter to desirable eye movement habits.
5. It tends to shift emphasis from meaning to pronunciation.
6. It does not insure application of phonetic analysis to words in context.
7. It fails to solve several important types of difficulties in recognising words.
8. It does not utilize children's power to detect similarities and differences of form other than phonetic.
9. It neglects individual differences.
10. Its over-use is often accountable for loss of interest in reading.

---

[4] Paul McKee, Reading and Literature in the Elementary School (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1934), p. 142.

[5] Ibid., p. 143.

[6] Elvira D. Cabell, "Status of Phonics Today," Chicago School Journal (Board of Education Press, Chicago, Illinois, 1930), p. 172.

Gates[7] said several years ago that there is no one way that is best for learning to recognize words in the teaching of reading, and that the phonic method of teaching reading is wasteful. He says "Phonics forces attention unnaturally to facts not needed or not needed at the time, on the other hand limiting the field of observation by prescribing only a few ways of analysis." Again Gates says, "Separated from the situation in which it is supposed to function, the phonics lesson must rely upon the carry-over of phonetic knowledge to the reading--a clumsy and wasteful process, with no certainty as to results." This causes phonics to lack harmony with the laws of learning. In an experiment made by Gates[8] in applying phonics to reading he found:

(1) The habit of reacting primarily by effort to pronounce,

(2) Inhibition of development of rate from proceeding by small units and also from too explicit articulation and,

(3) Narrow eye-voice span due to the habit of looking directly at the words pronounced.

It is said that as the teaching of phonics increases it tends to introduce stuttering by breaking words into their various parts, since the coordinations of the six-year-old child are not formed. Huey[9] says that seven out of every thousand children in Boston stutter and many more have speech defects of various kinds. This is believed to be a result of the early study of phonics.

---

[7] Arthur I. Gates, The Improvement of Reading (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1927), p. 165.

[8] Ibid., p. 165.

[9] Edmund Burke Huey, "Present-Day Methods and Texts in Elementary Reading," Ch. V in The History and Pedagogy of Reading (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1915), p. 168.

A report of the public schools of Boston[10] calls artificial phonic instruction the breeding ground of stuttering and stammering. This report says "The beauty of speech lies in smoothness, fluidity, and lack of hesitation which cannot be acquired by analysis, but by unconscious and skillful imitation of pure words."

Words hold an interest for children, but when they are broken into letters and syllables the word loses its fascination. Klapper[11] states, "Actual experience proves that the child remembers the arbitrary names of letters more easily than their arbitrary sounds." He gives some limitations of the phonic method:

This method when applied to English is often ineffective.

1. It makes the function of letters focal, but the sound of letters is precisely the least fixed element in our language; the sounds of letters vary to an exasperating degree.

2. It may encourage stammering among young children whose coordinations are still unformed and who show a tendency to linger on labials, dentals, and liquids. Any method which teaches reading by a process of phonic synthesis aggravates a tendency which the teacher must assiduously strive to eliminate.

3. It is apparent that this method is no less unpedagogical than the alphabetic, because it, too, begins, not at the point of contact between the child and reading, but at the most painful point, phonics. Experience proves that names of letters are retained more easily than their arbitrary sounds.

4. Speed is retarded, auditory images are exaggerated, lip reading is encouraged, and reading for thought is subordinated to "reading of" a set of symbols. (This applies to any synthetic phonic system.)

---

[10] Arnold Gesell and Beatrice Chandler Gesell, The Normal Child and Primary Education (Ginn and Company, Boston, 1912), p. 168.

[11] Paul Klapper, "The Basic Methods of Primary Reading," Ch. V in Teaching Children to Read (D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1922), p. 42.

Dolch[12] says that some teachers and some reading systems try to teach the child during his first year of school all the consonants, double consonants, vowels, and double vowels with their variations. He thinks this is very difficult for the six-year-old mind to grasp. Another difficulty, he says, is getting the child to apply his phonic knowledge to words that have not been discussed in the phonic lesson.

An experiment was made by Gates and Russell[13] and assisted by Works Progress Administration workers, with 554 students in the Borough of Manhattan, New York City, New York. The children were divided into three groups and each group was given a different type of phonic training. One group F was given extensive training in phonics, another group D was given a small amount of training, and the third group E was given work in word analysis noting the general features of words.

When scores were taken for all three groups the differences between them were small. Group E had the highest scores in comprehension and word recognition tests. The conclusion arrived at when the experiment was completed was that a program having no phonic training or very little is as good as a program having a large amount of phonic training, but neither is as beneficial as the informal program or the one used by group E.

Some authorities think that phonics should be withheld during the first two years of school, and introduced in the third year. The method for teaching reading is to begin with the sentence, break this sentence into phrases and then into words. The phonic method is exactly opposite to this according

---

12 Edward William Dolch, "Phonics," Ch. IV in The Psychology and Teaching of Reading (Ginn and Company, Boston, 1930), p. 76f.

13 Arthur I. Gates, David H. Russell, "Types of Materials, Vocabulary Burden, Word Analysis, and other Factors in Beginning Reading I," Elementary School Journal (The University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, September 1938), p. 27ff.

to Huey.[14] The child can be taught to read by this method but at a slower rate and in a mechanical way. Hughes[15] believes that phonics gives the child a definite and ready acquaintance with sounds and conforms with the laws of pedagogy, but that the child should not be taught phonics until he is about nine years of age. He thinks that it would be much better for the child's health and happiness as well as his rapid and intelligent progress in the study of reading if phonics were prolonged until the ninth year is reached. Hughes states that sounds of letters are abstractions to children; so phonics should not be taught when children are younger.

A study, Phonics or No Phonics, was made by Lillian Currier and Olive Duguid[16] in 1916. They experimented with first and second-grade children. Each grade was divided into two groups at the beginning of the year. One group was given the phonic development of words and the other had no knowledge of phonics. These groups were tested at the end of the school year. It was found that the pupils who had been given no phonics enjoyed their reading, had better comprehension, and read more rapidly, but were not as careful in regard to their pronunciation and often substituted words. The group which had received phonic training fatigued easily, read with less speed and comprehension, but read accurately. New words were attacked about the same by both groups. Children having speech impediments and those who had formed poor pronunciation habits such as foreign children were greatly helped by phonic drills. The no-phonic groups benefited the slow and hesi-

---

[14] Edmund Burke Huey, "The Early Period," Ch. VIII in Learning to Read at School (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1915), p. 96ff.

[15] James L. Hughes, "Teaching to Read," Ch. V in The Phonic Method (The A. S. Barnes Company, New York, 1912), p. 62ff.

[16] Lillian Beatrice Currier and Olive C. Duguid, "Phonics or No Phonics," Elementary School Journal (September 1922-June 1923), p. 286ff.

tent, and expressionless readers.

The experiment continued over a five-year period at the end of which time the same children were tested again. The conclusions arrived at were that phonic drill was very beneficial, but not necessary for every child. It was of value in word pronunciation drill. Careless reading and failing to get meaning from the printed page was found to be a result of poorly supervised silent reading. It was suggested that phonics should always be applied with discretion according to individual needs.

Another phonic experiment was made in the Newark public schools by Sexton and Herron.[17] They worked with groups of first graders and continued their study until the children had completed the first half of their second year. The experiment was conducted in eight schools from September, 1924, to February, 1927.* Special effort was made to make this study scientific. The grades were divided into A and B classes. The B class was composed of pupils entering, and the A class of pupils who had completed a semester's work in the grade. Those classes were divided into two groups, one using the phonic method and the other receiving no phonic training. A certain amount of time was taken from the reading period each day for phonic development and drill in the phonic group. When the classes were promoted the same method continued to be taught. At the end of each semester the groups were tested to determine which method was more valuable.

At the end of the first semester the groups were tested and the non-phonic group was in advance of the phonic group. The second semester also

---

[17] Elmer K. Sexton and John S. Herron, "The Newark Public Experiment," The Elementary School Journal (September 1927-June 1928), p. 690ff.

* The experiment continued for three consecutive semesters; hence the study should have ended February, 1926.

showed a gain in the non-phonic group but not as much as at the end of the first semester. Tests were given at the end of the first half of the second year and a decided gain was made in favor of the phonic group.

The results in the tests where words only were required showed that phonics function very early but where thought was required the teaching of phonics does not function appreciably until later. Beginners in reading are helped very little if at all during the first five months of school, but during the remaining months of the year some value is received from the training, and much better results are observed during the second year. The experimenters favored some phonic instruction beginning the second half of the first year.

A question is raised by Pyle,[18] "How in using a phonic method can we deal with silent letters?" Cabell[19] states that analysis of words goes only a little way in solving words, because the word elements do not constantly represent the same sounds.

Pennell and Cusack[20] say, "The Phonic analysis is the slowest process to the pronunciation of words." They substantiate this statement by saying that the word must be analyzed into phonic elements and then put together again by blending to produce the whole word.

Sometimes children are advised to look for a known element of the word and then analyze the word into its various parts. This is a faulty way of working out new words, and is called by Stone[20] the "Hunt-and-Pick" method.

---

18 William Henry Pyle, Psychology of Common Branches (The Maple Press Company, New York, 1928), p. 45.

19 Elvira D. Cabell, "Status of Phonics Today, III," Chicago School Journal (February, 1932), p. 254.

20 Mary E. Pennell and Alice M. Cusack, The Teaching of Reading for Better Living (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1935), p. 205.

21 Clarence R. Stone, "Developing Accuracy, Fluency, and Independence in Word Recognition," Ch. IX in Better Primary Reading (Webster Publishing Company, St. Louis, 1936), p. 400ff.

Children are advised often to look for known parts in words, such as, find and what, and when they see in and at, they will have much difficulty in making out the word. What Stone says is needed is a complete analysis in sequence. When children reach the upper grades and begin the study of polysyllables, where words must be divided into syllables, much difficulty is met with, because previously phonic knowledge was the means of recognising syllables.

The separate pronunciation of parts of one-syllable words is a too long-drawn-out process for ready and successful blending. Many times after tearing the word apart, the child cannot get it together again. This has more disadvantages than advantages, Stone says.[22]

Dolch[23] lists two difficulties which must be encountered when meeting phonograms:

> First, that before the familiar phonogram can be pronounced there must be a definite habit of visual analysis, or of looking at the beginning or ending of a word as the case may be.
>
> Second, we find that the lists of phonograms selected from the commonest words of the language do not really appear often enough in the work of any one primer for them to be remembered.

According to Pennell and Cusack[24] many children have become rapid readers who have never had any training in phonics. By giving excessive attention to word analysis through the study of phonics, it has caused many special types of difficulty in reading, such as word-calling, narrow eye-span,

---

[22] Ibid., p. 407.

[23] Edward William Dolch, op. cit., p. 88.

[24] Mary E. Pennell and Alice M. Cusack, The Teaching of Reading for Better Living, p. 205.

unnatural articulation, and slow comprehension. It has made children word-conscious to the extent that interest in meanings and ability to see the whole word-form have been lost by dissecting word-parts.

While some authorities condemn the teaching of phonics altogether, a few think that it should be introduced in the third year of school. The harmful results overshadow the beneficial outcomes with first-grade children according to findings made by experiments.

According to the experiment by Currier and Duguid[25] all children do not need to be given phonics as an aid to their reading. The writer agrees with these authors because it causes a waste of time for the children who can read well without this aid.

Another criticism made against the teaching of phonics is that children dwell too much on the parts of the word instead of on the whole word. This causes slow comprehension and a small eye-span. Both of these are detrimental to reading progress.

The English alphabet is not constant in the sound of letters. The child has much difficulty and becomes discouraged when he tries to apply his phonic rules to all letters and finds that his rules are useless.

Phonics should be used neither excessively nor exclusively. All children do not learn at the same rate of speed nor in the same manner. The teacher must allow for these individual differences, and try to apply phonics to the needs of each child.

---

[25] Lillian Beatrice Currier and Olive C. Duguid, op. cit., p. 286.

CHAPTER IV

ADVANTAGES DERIVED FROM THE TEACHING OF PHONICS

While supervisors, primary teachers, and experts in the field do not agree as to whether phonics should be taught in the primary grades, they all agree that some word analysis training should be given when or shortly after reading is introduced. "Although there is more or less doubt about the need of phonic training, some of it probably should be given, and should begin about the middle of the second month," is the statement used by Brooks.[1] The ultimate aim in teaching phonics is to enable pupils to unlock words by recognizing letter groupings that lead instantly to the vision of word wholes.

When the child first begins to meet unfamiliar difficult words in his first-grade school experiences, the school should have a well-defined system of instruction to help the child in analyzing his difficulties. Many words which are encountered are not a part of the child's speaking vocabulary; so some way of separating words into their phonic elements is of value. Wheat[2] thinks that phonic training should be given all during the primary school period and says, "Such training is a legitimate phase of instruction in reading. It represents a taking advantage of the opportunity for instruction offered by the natural bent of the pupils to view in detail the new and difficult words which appear in their reading."

---

[1] Fowler D. Brooks, "Effective Silent and Oral Reading," The Applied Psychology of Reading (D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1926), p. 146.

[2] Harry Grove Wheat, "Reading in the First Grade," Ch. XII in The Teaching of Reading (Ginn and Company, Boston, 1925), p. 93.

Dolch[3] thinks that there are many immediate values to be gained from a knowledge of phonics. The child is given independence, he is enabled to attack new stories, read material outside of school, and do many kinds of seat work. All of this helps him to read by himself since he can learn new words, and also review old ones by meeting them often in new reading. This enables the child to be his own teacher since his knowledge of recognizing words is not altogether automatic. When the child meets new words in books, papers, and magazines he finds a real need for phonics. Phonic families should be organized with words found in the book that is to be read. It secures, says Dolch,

(1) A habit of the phonic words when necessary,

(2) recognition of the phonic words in the reading book, and

(3) in so far as is possible ability in phonic attack on new words.

Klapper[4] listed a few advantages to be found in the phonic method:

(1) It is more logical to teach the functions than the letters;

(2) It gives the child a better trained ear and a better articulated speech;

(3) It is an aid in spelling, even in our unphonetic language; and,

(4) It teaches the child how to attack a word whose form is absolutely new to him.

A child learns many sight words from repetition of words, phrases, and sentence units. By repeating the word many times, he can recognize it at sight. The child increases his knowledge of sight words rapidly. After he has learned many words, it becomes difficult for him to remember words

---

[3] Edward William Dolch, "Phonics," Ch. IV in The Psychology and Teaching of Reading (Ginn and Company, Boston, 1931), p. 72.

[4] Paul Klapper, "The Basic Methods of Primary Reading," Ch. V in Teaching Children to Read (D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1922), p. 59f.

and to differentiate between them. This is the reason the child should have a means of analyzing a whole word when he has forgotten how to pronounce it, Cordts[5] believes. He should have an independent, sure means of pronouncing new words. When children engage in silent reading and are left to themselves, they analyze the words in some way. For this reason also, the school should give them an effective method of analysis.

McKee[6] says that in order for children to be able to read orally with expression and understanding, they must read with speed and accuracy. This can be accomplished only if they can pronounce and recognize words in the selections read. Therefore, children must be taught methods of pronouncing and recognizing words.

O'Brien[7] says that the teaching of reading is not complete with thought getting of simple paragraphs, because when the child advances beyond the primary grade level more difficult paragraphs and words are to be encountered. Then he finds himself bewildered. At this time the child's knowledge of phonics becomes essential, and with this knowledge he can analyze words into their elements from his previous training in phonics. O'Brien says, "The distinction between training to master differences in word forms and in their phonetic element, is as fundamental as the distinction between reading and spelling. Both types of training are ultimately indispensable."

---

[5] Anna D. Cordts, Classroom Teacher (The Classroom Teacher, Inc., Chicago, 1927), p. 390.

[6] John Anthony O'Brien, "Reading Difficulties: Their Diagnosis and Remedial Treatment by Clinical Method," Ch. IX in Reading, Its Psychology and Pedagogy (The Century Company, New York, 1926), p. 150f.

[7] Paul McKee, "Vocabulary Development," Ch. IX in The Thirty-Sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Illinois, 1937), p. 287.

It is believed by Pyle[8] that exceptional children learn the sounds and use of letters without training. Since this is true, he thinks that all children should be given this advantage through the teaching of the aid of phonics. He says the phonic method proves valuable by giving the child a clue in order to give a name to new words.

Freeman[9] says:

> Some amount of phonetic teaching is undoubtedly of value in helping the child both to analyze the spoken words into their sounds and to make the associations between the sound and the letter which it represents. This prevents waste of time and leads to an earlier formation of the association than would occur if the association were made wholly by the incidental method.

Pennell and Cusack[10] hold that the teaching of phonics helps the child in both his reading and speaking when the phonics taught are well selected and are closely related to the words in the reading material. They state that phonics help the child:

1. In the identification of new words.
   The ability to attack new words enables the child to get the thought more rapidly and makes him independent of the teacher's help. Some children seem unconsciously to associate certain sounds with the symbols that represent them. Others must be taught how to do this; that is, they must learn phonics.

2. In enunciation and pronunciation.
   The ability to recognize the sound of certain symbols as et in get, atch in catch, ing in doing, makes the child better able to pronounce correctly and enunciate clearly these words which are so commonly miscalled.

---

[8] William Henry Pyle, Psychology of Learning (The Maple Press Company, York, Pennsylvania, 1928), p. 45f.

[9] Frank N. Freeman, Psychology of Common Branches (Houghton Mifflin Company, New York, 1916), p. 79.

[10] Mary E. Pennell and Alice M. Cusack, "Specific Helps for the Kindergarten and First Grade," Ch. VI in The Teaching of Reading for Better Living (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1935), p. 75f.

3. In the development of speech coordinations.

Many children seem to be unable to give certain sounds correctly. This may be due to physical reasons or bad habit formation. These bad habits, caused by the child being allowed to continue baby talk, imitating the incorrect sounds which he hears others use, or hearing inaccurately, may be corrected by means of phonics.

The lack of phonics to be used as word recognition was a cause given by Monroe and Backus[11] which was noticed with deaf children and those who lacked sound discrimination.

Dr. E. W. Scripture[12] tells us that phonic training is of inestimable value for ear training, clear enunciation, breath control, and the discovery and correction of speech defects. In aiding the stutterer and stammerer the cure involves gaining control over the vocal organs. Drill in phonics awakens an ear consciousness. In order to obtain the desired flexibility of tongue, jaws, lips, and teeth, deep breathing must be practiced. Breath control and flexibility keep the vocal organs in readiness to operate smoothly and effectively. The "melody cure" used by Scripture is in keeping with phonic exercises used by teachers. Four reasons are given by him for phonic drill:

1. Ear training,

2. Clear enunciation,

3. Breath control,

4. The discovery and correction of speech defects.

Huey[13] substantiates Scripture's findings by saying that drill in sound analysis trains the articulation, the ear, the ability to sound letters of new words, and gives power in pronouncing words.

---

11 Marion Monroe and Bertie Backus, Remedial Reading (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1937), p. 19.

12 E. W. Scripture, Stuttering, Lisping, and The Control of Speech of the Deaf (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1916), p. 62ff.

13 Edmund Burke Huey, The History and Pedagogy of Reading (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1915), p. 82.

When a child meets new and difficult words unfamiliar to him, he needs to make use of his abilities in phonics. After the child makes the word a part of him, he discards phonics and then recognizes the word in the same and in larger units.

Betts[14] thinks that a modified program of phonics should be advocated according to the individual needs as a help in word recognition.

A co-operative study of reading readiness and progress was made in the Horace Mann School for four years by Wilson, Flemming, Burke, and Garrison[15] with kindergarten and first, second, and third-grade children. This study was begun in the autumn of 1933; 106 measures and appraisals were obtained covering scholastic, physical, psychological, and social aspects of the children's development.

One of the conclusions of this study was that the kindergarten and first-grade children who knew the most letter forms and sounds seemed very definitely to be among those to learn to read first and later to become the best readers. The children who did not know letter forms and sounds tended pronouncedly to be poor readers. Teachers reported that the children used initial letters and endings, evidenced by sounding of initial letters, as clues to words. The errors made in reading words and sentences were due largely to errors in letters that made up the words. In the Horace Mann School in most rooms little or no formal isolated drill is given on letters or phonic combinations although letter names and sounds are taught

---

[14] Emmett Albert Betts, The Prevention and Correction of Reading Difficulties (Row, Peterson and Company, Evanston, Illinois, 1936), p. 310.

[15] Frank T. Wilson, Cecile White Flemming, Agnes Burke, and Charlotte G. Garrison, "Reading Progress in Kindergarten and Primary Grades," The Elementary School Journal (The University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, February 1938), p. 442ff.

in a functional way by drawing attention to initial letter forms and sounds as the name "Mary" is contrasted with "Marie."

It was found that Kindergarten children were interested in individual letters and reading tests. Learning to read was not compelled of these children; so the conclusion was drawn that this was one of the most convincing arguments that basic symbols of reading in relation to form and sounds have a vital place in beginning reading.

It is said by Pennell and Cusack[16] that phonic training is very helpful for foreign children, because it helps them in speech coordination and auditory perception as well as developing an attack for new words. Phonics helps all children to recognize words independently. In the First Grade Manual by the above authors, it states, "The teacher should teach first those word elements which the child must know in order to read well."

Hahn[17] thinks that word-getting is not so important in the teaching of phonics as is enunciation and pronunciation. Enunciation and pronunciation are the immediate aims in this study.

Storm and Smith[18] assert, "Since children do analyze it is the business of the teacher to help them to do it effectively and to prevent waste of time and discouragement."

"However, since phonic training appears to help certain children, he should be prepared to meet the exigencies of his particular group with a

---

16 Mary E. Pennell and Alice M. Cusack, The Children's Own Readers, Manual (Ginn and Company, Boston, 1929), p. 280ff.

17 Julia Letheld Hahn, First Grade Manual, Child Development Readers (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1935), p. XXX.

18 Grace E. Storm and Nila B. Smith, Reading Activities in the Primary Grades (Ginn and Company, Boston, 1930), p. 228.

knowledge of a fair comprehensive phonetic scheme by means of which individual differences and needs may be served," says Witty and Kopel.[19]

The National Committee on Reading[20] outlined some results to be attained in teaching phonics:

(a) Knowledge of a number of phonetic elements.

(b) Accurate pronunciation and enunciation as well as reading situations.

(c) Accurate pronunciation and enunciation as well as ready recognition.

(d) The habit of seeing a word as a unit made up of known parts.

(e) The habit of attacking an unknown word and working it out independently.

"There should be no more conflict or rivalry between phonics and reading than between reading and speaking," Hall[21] says.

Stone[22] believes that a standard vocabulary list is useful for the teacher when she plans her lessons in phonics. This list is beneficial as a source for letters and combinations from known words. This is a time-saving device. He also states a few values of phonic training in his Standards of Attainment:

11. Ability to hear likeness of sounds in different words as in the case of words that rime or that have the same beginning sound.

---

19 Paul Witty and David Kopel, "Educational Instruction and Supervision Including Teacher Training," Educational Administration and Supervision (Warwick and York, Inc., Baltimore, Maryland, 1937), vol. XXIII, p. 332.

20 Arthur I. Gates, "Studies of Phonetic Training in Beginning Reading," Journal of Educational Psychology (Warwick and York, Inc., York, Pennsylvania), vol. XVIII, p. 217-226.

21 G. Stanley Hall, "How to Teach Reading," in How to Teach Reading and What to Read in School (D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1908), pam., p. 8.

22 Clarence R. Stone, "Developing Accuracy, Fluency and Independence in Word Recognition," Ch. IX in Better Primary Reading (Webster Publishing Company, St. Louis, Missouri, 1936), p. 27, 59f.

12. Knowledge of the following initial sounds: s, m, h, b, p, f, c (hard sound), n.

13. Ability to combine context clues and known initial sounds in solving word-recognition difficulties.

Phonic training helps children to be observant in noticing the rhyming sounds and the similarities of beginning sounds in words. It should enable children to build words and to analyse them without the teacher's help or to be taught each word individually. That is Parker's[23] view of phonics.

A study of remedial instruction as it is carried on in Horace Mann School in the Elementary and Junior High School was made by Unsicker and Flemming.[24] The subjects dealt with were arithmetic, reading, spelling, study skills, social adjustment, mathematics, skills in English. Some general weaknesses of spelling were given. One of them was the lack of a reasonable degree of phonic skill for the pronunciation of words. This seems to prove that phonics should be taught as an aid to spelling.

"Phonetic training should hold a definite but subordinate place in the teaching of reading. Its value as a tool in aiding the pupil to overcome 'periods of confusion' when reading perhaps cannot be overestimated," says Smith.[25]

In a Research Bulletin of the National Education Association[26] it is

---

[23] Samuel Chester Parker, "How to Teach Beginning Reading," The Elementary School Journal, November 1921, p. 258ff.

[24] Cecilia E. Unsicker and Cecile White Flemming, "Remedial Instruction and Aid to Effective Study," Teachers College Record (Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, 1933), vol. 34, p. 407f.

[25] Nila Banton Smith, American Reading Instruction (Silver, Burdett, and Company, New York, 1934), p. 279.

[26] "Better Reading Instruction," Research Bulletin of the National Educational Association (Research Division of the National Education Association, Washington, D. C., vol. XIII, 1935), p. 285ff.

stated,

> Nearly all authorities in reading agree that children should have a certain amount of practise in word analysis, that is, phonetic training. Without it, they are handicapped in the presence of unfamiliar words and may, on the one hand, depend on the teacher to tell them the new words, or, on the other, resort to random guesses.

Two devices were used by teachers to help children cope with new words. They were context clues and phonic drills. In phonics much time was given to initial and final letters.

Dolch[27] calls phonics a natural method in the teaching of word recognition, because all people pronounce words in sections consciously and unconsciously. He thinks that the child needs some system by which to pronounce strange symbols that he meets outside of words taught by the teacher. It gives independence in word recognition, and this independence helps in various kinds of seat work, attacking new stories, and approaching new material outside of school. This enables the child to use his knowledge by repetition and acquaintance with new words. The ultimate aim in the study of phonics should give the power to pronounce words that are unknown by sound. Phonics will be motivated thoroughly when this need arises, and motivation is the imperative step in learning at all times. Dolch[28] says again: "If we secure real facility in use of the individual letters to 'unlock' words, practice will go far to lead to rapid sounding of syllables or other letter groups."

According to the opinions of various authorities, training in phonics should be given as a clue to unlock unfamiliar words. The initial sounds

---

[27] Edward William Dolch, op. cit., p. 70ff.

[28] Ibid., p. 261.

are aids in recognizing word wholes. This training should begin during the first year, because the child has many difficulties to encounter in his new experiences with words.

When children attack words in and out of school, they are helped by phonics to make out forgotten and new words without the teacher's or parent's assistance. This encourages and gives confidence to the beginner in reading.

As the child advances in the grades, his knowledge of phonics helps in analyzing difficult words into their elements, and is also an aid in spelling of phonetically built words. Children should be taught to enunciate clearly, and according to Hahn,[29] Scripture,[30] Pennell and Cusack[31] phonic training gives clear distinct pronunciation and enunciation. The writer thinks that is a beneficial outcome.

If it is true that children do analyze, the school should help them in their efforts in order that their energy may not be futile.

Since phonic training helps to overcome word difficulties and is advantageous in learning to read and to speak correctly the school should prove of assistance by giving the child a phonic background as a key to unlock words.

---

[29] Julia Letheld Hahn, op. cit., p. XXX.

[30] E. W. Scripture, op. cit., p. 82ff.

[31] Mary E. Pennell and Alice M. Cusack, op. cit., p. 78f.

CHAPTER V

PITFALLS IN THE TEACHING OF PHONICS

It has been found that there are many pitfalls in the teaching of phonics. These pitfalls must be guarded against by the teacher if she wishes to make phonics an aid to children in their reading experiences. Too much emphasis upon phonics will develop incorrect attitudes toward reading and will produce the wrong habits of word attack when the children meet difficulties. Stone[1] says "The habit of invariably resorting to analytical sounding or analytical pronunciation in case of word difficulty is a pitfall to be avoided." Many times when giving instruction in phonics, the method taught will work part of the time and other times it will not. Letter by letter sounding is used often and the child fails to blend these letters into a whole in order to gain a clear pronunciation of the whole word. This is the case with many poor readers. Analytical sounding of word parts causes the child to fail to grasp the meaning of the sentence, and also the aid that phonic training is to give.

Another pitfall, says Gesell,[2] is separating the consonant from the word and vocalizing it. Consonants should place the vocal organs in position. "They are the triggers of speech, set the trigger, and when it falls it will release the vowel and send it to its journey's end." When drilling

---

1 Clarence R. Stone, "Developing Accuracy, Fluency, and Independence in Word Recognition," Ch. IX in Better Primary Reading (Webster Publishing Company, St. Louis, Missouri, 1936), p. 487ff.

2 Arnold Gesell and Beatrice Chandler Gesell, "Phonics and Speech," Ch. XI in The Normal Child and Primary Education (Ginn and Company, Boston, 1912), p. 159.

children it is best to let them imitate the teacher's vocal sounds and say the word quickly.

The teacher should avoid teaching phonics with the first reading lessons, since the children do not have a background of facts and word interest which is necessary for effective study. The teacher must be cautious not to overemphasize phonic drill in the early stages when the child is learning to read. Huey[3] believes that if the phonic method is used too soon, it results in word reading, since the thought of the sentence is lost in the long procedure of getting the word. There are two general considerations which must be kept in mind, says Gray:[4]

> (a) The sounds of the successive elements into which a word is divided should result in a natural and accurate pronunciation of the word when the sounds of these elements are combined;
>
> (b) The system of analysis which is used should be so organized that the habits developed in the analysis of short words in the lower grades will aid rather than interfere with the accurate analysis of longer words when they are encountered.

A child must not be trained too much in word analysis or he will lose his interest in comprehending meaning from the page. Cabell[5] states, "It is easy to overtrain a child in observing single words, just as it is quite possible to become expert in recognising words and phrases and yet not have a good grasp of their meaning." If a child tries to meet all of his diffi-

---

[3] Edmund Burke Huey, The Psychology and Pedagogy of Reading (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1919), p. 294.

[4] William S. Gray, "Principles of Method in Teaching Reading as Derived from Scientific Investigation," Ch. II in The Eighteenth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II (Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Illinois, 1919), p. 50f.

[5] Elvira D. Cabell, "Status of Phonics Today, III," Chicago School Journal (Board of Education Press, Chicago, Illinois, February, 1932), p. 253.

culties by a mechanical device, he will be handicapped in reading efficiently, because children can and do learn to read well analyzing with little conscious effort. Analyses of words go only a little way in solving words, because the word-elements do not constantly represent the same sounds. When children are told to find a known element in a word and then to analyze it, the result often will be to cause them to use the "Hunt-and-Pick" system, as described by Stone,[6] which is not advisable.

Currier and Duguid[7] believe that work in phonics should not be crowded. A period of three or four years is required to gain a good knowledge of the phonic make-up of words. Phonic training should consist of the phonograms that children will use most constantly in their reading. The phonograms should be investigated according to their relative importance in order that the most important ones be taught. The easiest sounds should be taught first, since they can be prolonged indefinitely such as "r," "f," "l," "m," and "s." Blendings are the difficult part of phonic work. The teacher must take special care to see that the vocal organs are given practical consideration in all of the exercises.

Interesting material is always essential in presenting work in phonics to the class. It is needless to say that the word as a whole should be known before it is broken into sounds and families. The endings of words are usually referred to as a family, such as, "an" in "can," "fan," and "man." The initial letters are called first names or double first names as "p-an" and "pl-an." Consonants should be blended smoothly such as "sl" not

---

[6] Clarence R. Stone, op. cit., p. 400ff.

[7] Lillian Beatrice Currier, and Olive C. Duguid, "Phonics or No Phonics," The Elementary School Journal (The University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois), vol. 25:448-452.

"s-l," "th" not "t-h." The first names should precede the teaching of family names. The teacher should have varied materials and equipment in the presentation of phonics. When "m" is presented as a new sound, Montgomery[8] suggests that the teacher's material may be a short story about a cow, a picture of a cow saying "m-m-m-m," or a flash card with the word "c-ow" on it. It should be remembered that the more interest taken in sounds the deeper the impressions made in the child and the fewer repetitions are needed. The first lessons in phonics should be short since they may be fatiguing. Drill should be given often and according to the needs of the child. After several first names and families have been taught, word building may begin. There are four steps in the teaching of phonics: Teach new words or first names, drill, teach families, and build new words.

Fluency, accuracy, and independence in word recognition are acquired very easily with some children. With others it is very difficult. There should be a difference in the training of these two types of children. Not all children need the same amount of phonics. Hahn[9] says, "The alert teacher will then build upon their discoveries as it seems necessary." Those children who acquire these traits easily should be provided with opportunities for recreative reading, while the others should be given special instruction in word recognition. Stone[10] says:

> . . . The stage or level in reading of the group of children rather than grade placement should determine the skill and habit objectives and the phonetic knowledge taught. Consequently instruction in phonics, as a rule, should be by groups rather than the room of children as a whole.

---

8 Catharine Montgomery, Graded Phonics for First and Second Grade (State Normal School, Bellingham, Washington, 1908), Pam., p. 8.

9 Julia Letheld Hahn, Child Development Readers, Manual (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1935), p. XXXI.

10 Clarence R. Stone, op. cit., p. 430.

The child should not become too conscious of minute details for comprehension will be overlooked and reading will become a word-calling mechanical process. In teaching phonics it should not be made a science in itself by too detailed a treatment, for then it fails to become an aid in teaching the child to read, Pennell and Cusack[11] think.

Betts[12] gives six statements about phonics which the teacher should keep in mind in phonic training:

> First, only about 84 per cent of the commonly used words are phonetic.
>
> Second, the many exceptions to each rule may introduce interference factors which cause confusions. The use of phonetic rules is a questionable procedure.
>
> Third, the distortion of the sound value of a given phonetic element in a word confuses the beginner rather than facilitates learning.
>
> Fourth, overemphasis on mechanical analysis leads to "word calling" rather than "thought getting."
>
> Fifth, only elements with a high frequency of occurrence should be taught; otherwise, the knowledge and skills cannot be practiced.
>
> Sixth, a disproportionate amount of time may be spent on phonetics which is only one aspect of word recognition. If carried to an extreme, phonetic instruction would include all the confusing rules of syllabication.

Dolch[13] says that some authorities say phonics taught during the regular reading lesson interferes with reading, and that the child should have numerous familiar phonograms at his command when he starts to analyze

---

11 Mary E. Pennell and Alice M. Cusack, The Teaching of Reading for Better Living (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1935), p. 206.

12 Emmett Albert Betts, The Prevention and Correction of Reading Difficulties (Row, Peterson and Company, Evanston, Illinois, 1936), p. 220.

13 Edward William Dolch, "Phonics," Ch. IV in The Psychology and Teaching of Reading (Ginn and Company, Boston, 1931), p. 89f.

a new word in order to recognize the old in the new by detecting similarities. He says that there is no basis for these assertions, because experiments and experience show that analyzing words does not hinder the child in his reading, and that the number of phonograms which the child knows should be few or he will forget them. The program of phonics should be well integrated with the reading lessons. The teacher who stops the child many times during the reading lesson, when he does not know a word to give a phonic lesson by sounding words and asking for similar ones, is making a serious mistake according to Dolch.[14] He believes that anything which destroys true reading interest is lax as the child does not always want to discontinue, even temporarily, a story in which he is interested. The teacher should only use as much phonics as is essential and then let the reading of the story continue. Teaching phonics in a period apart from reading may not "carry over" because the child only needs to look at the initial sounds and never at the family in a phonic lesson, while in reading he must look at the initial sound, family sound, think the word, and then say it.

Phonics can be taught too late as well as too early, says Cordts.[15] After the child has learned to recognize his words in another way which he has worked out for himself, it is too late to introduce phonics.

Some ambitious teachers try to teach too many consonants and blends during the first year. This can easily become too large a task for a six-year-old. If the child has forgotten a word or partly forgotten it, he will try to work it out according to phonic rules. If it is a word where the rule

---

[14] Ibid., p. 93f.

[15] Anna D. Cordts, The Word Method of Teaching Phonics (Ginn and Company, Boston, 1929), p. 6.

does not work, the child's confidence in phonics will be broken. The child often becomes confused by the teacher putting too much emphasis on the initial sound of a word, as for example, pronouncing "will" as if it were "wuh-ill." Betts[16] says, "One of the greatest dangers in the use of any phonic method is the distortion of the consonant sounds." Also, "One of the chief errors in the study of phonics is the emphasis on the auditory aspect. In the final analysis, phonics is largely a matter of visual analysis." Stone[17] states, "The concensus of expert opinion now is that the analysis and blending in the case of one-syllable words should be visual and mental with inner speech aiding rather than separated sounding of the parts."

Fifteen years ago Gates[18] stated that it takes a wealth of experience with various kinds of words which contain phonograms in order to know the form a phonogram will take in a word. The child who is beginning his reading experience does not know this and cannot learn it easily, and when he learns a form it is not easy to apply or remember.

Horn[19] says that phonics may not be thought desirable and this conclusion may be due to one or more of these five causes:

1. It must be admitted that the investigations of phonics vs. non-phonic training which have been made up to the present time have been poorly controlled. It is possible that, were the factor of phonic training skilfully isolated and the results of the experiment adequately analyzed, a superiority would be shown.

---

16 Emmett Albert Betts, op. cit., p. 219.

17 Clarence R. Stone, op. cit., p. 401.

18 Arthur I. Gates, "Problems in Beginning Reading," Teachers College Record (Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City, September 1924-June 1925), vol. 26:572.

19 Ernest Horn, "The Child's Early Experience with the Letter A," Journal of Educational Psychology (Warwick and York, Inc., York, Pennsylvania, 1929), vol. 20:161-168.

2. It is probable that many children who have not been taught phonics have made their own comparisons between words and have in that way built up a sort of phonic system of their own. It is a common thing to find some children who have had no phonic training but who show remarkable ability to pronounce words which they have never read before. Many so-called "intrinsic methods" really include phonic training.

3. An analysis of existing phonic systems shows that many of them either contain serious phonetic inaccuracies or are clumsily devised.

4. It is likely that few teachers teach any system of phonics as it is planned to be taught.

5. The unphonetic character of the English language may constitute an insurmountable barrier to successful rationalisation.

"An overemphasis of phonics establishes such harmful habits as progressing in small units, narrow eye-voice span, and a too explicit articulation and comprehension," asserts Storm.[20] Overemphasis should not be placed on words without directing attention to the meaning, or the child may be led to think that pronunciation is the ultimate aim of reading. Hahn[21] says, "It is for such reasons that phonetic work in the beginning grades should be confined to words as the pupil meets them in meaningful context."

Excessive attention to phonic analysis has caused special types of difficulty in reading such as word-calling, narrow eye-span, slow comprehension, and unnatural articulation. The children have become word-conscious to such an extent that they have lost interest in meanings and ability to see the whole word-form in the process of dissecting word-parts. This is Pennell

---

[20] Grace E. Storm and Nila B. Smith, "Phonetic Analysis and Word-Recognition," Ch. X in Reading Activities in the Primary Grades (Ginn and Company, Boston, 1930), p. 249.

[21] Julia Letheld Hahn, op. cit., p. XXIX.

and Cusack's belief.[22]

The way that teachers have handled or mishandled phonics, and not knowing the real purpose of phonics has caused some people to disapprove of this subject as an aid to teaching reading. It is only a tool and McKee[23] says that if it is overemphasized it will lead to word-calling and will hinder the powers of comprehension. Phonic drill and reading lessons must be closely correlated, otherwise it will not be helpful to the child. He gives seven principles that the teacher must remember.

1. Phonics is only one tool for use in attacking strange words. Other tools such as analogy are important and need to be taught to the child.

2. Phonetic analysis is not a method of teaching children to read. It is merely a tool to be used in recognising strange words and should be treated as such by the teacher and pupils.

3. Drill in phonetic analysis must not be emphasized to the point that the child fails to read for meaning. Such intensive training defeats its own purpose and probably destroys proper reading attitudes and interests.

4. Phonetic training is only one of several activities to be pursued in the first grade relative to the reading program.

5. Phonetic training is not an end in itself. It is merely a means to gathering thought from printed expressions.

6. The phonetic training provided must be that which the child needs most in actual reading situations.

7. Training in phonics should occur outside the so-called regular reading period in which reading should be taught as a thought-getting process.

Analytical sounding of word parts seems to be used often, and this should be avoided since it produces unnatural sounds and separates consonants

---

[22] Mary E. Pennell and Alice M. Cusack, op. cit., p. 205.

[23] Paul McKee, "The Program in Comprehension for the First Grade," Ch. VI in Reading and Literature in the Elementary School (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1934), p. 192f.

from the remaining part of the word. The teacher must be cautious of this or it will lead the child into many difficulties. Blending of letters is not easy for the beginner, in fact, it is the difficult part of phonic work, according to Currier and Duguid.[24] For this reason the children should be given a good example of enunciating by the teacher and carefully noticed to see if they place their vocal organs in the correct positions. Much of the work in blending should be visual and mental.

All children should not be given the same type of phonic training. The ones who are able to recognize words easily without help should not have the same kind of training as the ones who cannot. It is for these who cannot recognize words quickly that training in phonics is most useful.

Phonics should be taught before the child has acquired an individual method of working out his words. Since too much stress on phonics will cause harmful results such as narrow eye-span, slow comprehension, and word-calling, overemphasis on this subject should be guarded against. The children must be taught that comprehension is the ultimate aim of all reading, and phonics is one of the means that will enable them to interpret words which will help in comprehending meaning from the printed page.

---

[24] Lillian Beatrice Currier and Olive C. Duguid, op. cit., p. 448f.

CHAPTER VI

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

This thesis has, as its main objective, the critical study of phonics as an aid to the teaching of first-grade reading. The purpose has been:

1. To present the relative position of phonics as the technique is practiced in school systems and presented in readers in various parts of the United States.

2. To produce evidence against an overuse of phonics.

3. To express the favorable outcomes possible by using phonics in the teaching of reading.

4. To set forth the dangers encountered which are to be guarded against in teaching phonics.

The objectives for teaching phonics are:

1. To make children independent readers.

2. To promote correct enunciation, articulation, and pronunciation.

3. To aid in the teaching of spelling.

4. To make children become efficient readers through developing ability in the recognition of new, unfamiliar words.

The writer has considered these topics:

1. The beneficial results to be obtained from slow, average, and superior pupils in reading.

2. The initial training in phonics that provide for the ear, eye, and voice training.

3. The rating of phonics in some of the larger school systems, and manuals accompanying first-grade readers.

4. The best time for the presentation of phonics.

5. How phonics should be presented to make the study interesting to the first-grade child.

6. Experiments made by educators in this field.

7. Points the teacher should know in order to guide pupils.

8. Obstacles to be avoided.

Conclusions

Authorities vary as to the best time that phonics should be presented, but most agree and the writer concludes from the material read on this subject that:

1. Phonics should be presented within the first six weeks of school.

2. Ear and voice training should precede formal phonic work.

3. Formal phonics should not be taken up until between sixty and a hundred words have been learned.

There is a difference in opinions as to the best time for phonics to be studied. Some think that it should be studied during the reading period. Most of the manuals and courses of study give phonics a special period. The writer agrees with authorities who think that phonics should be given a special period, and then used in the reading period when occasions arise for analyzing words. Pennell and Cusack[1] give seven points that aid in the introduction of phonics:

1. Phonetics should be taught in periods separate and distinct from the reading period. In the reading period, however, the children should make use of phonetic elements in the identification of new words.

2. Ear training should precede eye training.

---

[1] Mary E. Pennell and Alice M. Cusack, The Children's Own Readers, Manual (Ginn and Company, Boston, 1929), p. 283.

3. Attention should be paid to individual needs.

4. Individual work rather than concert work should be stressed.

5. No word the meaning of which the child does not know should be used in phonetic work.

6. In pronouncing a word the child should not give the separate sounds of which the word is composed, as c and at or ca and t, but think the sound of the elements and give the word cat.

From an evaluation of the reading which has been done on this subject, the conclusion seems justified that phonics is of much importance to the child who is learning to read. Contributions are:

1. Giving independence in enabling the child to read new material by himself.

2. Aiding in identifying new words.

3. Recognizing familiar and unfamiliar words.

4. Helping in enunciation and pronunciation.

5. Assisting foreign children in speech coordination.

6. Aiding the child as he advances in school to spell words that are made up of phonic elements.

Steps are presented in teaching phonics as given in an earlier chapter. These are given by Montgomery:[2]

1. Interest material.

2. Teach new sound.

3. Drill.

4. Teach family.

5. Build new words.

---

[2] Catharine Montgomery, Graded Phonics for First and Second Grades (State Normal School, Bellingham, Washington, 1908), p. 3.

There are standards of phonic training which the writer believes should be attained in the first year. The study warrants these conclusions:

1. Knowledge of initial sounds such as f, b, c, m, and s.

2. Power to hear differences and likenesses of sounds as in rhymes, simple stories, and words that begin with the same sound.

3. Analysing words without help secured from the teacher.

4. Working a new word out independently.

5. Ability to see a word made up of known phonic elements.

There are many precautions which the teacher must guard against in order not to overemphasise phonic training and to make it most effective. Detailed treatment of phonics should be avoided for then it loses its value and endangers comprehension. In order for phonic training to be most beneficial to the first-grade child in reading there are certain practices which should be avoided:

1. All sounds and their variations should not be taught during the first year.

2. Letter by letter sounding of words.

3. Teaching phonics to beginners who have had no experience in reading.

4. Overemphasizing phonic training to the extent that interest is lost.

5. Distortion of consonant sounds.

6. Excessive attention to analyses of words resulting in word-calling, narrow eye-span, slow comprehension, and unnatural articulation.

7. Placing too much emphasis upon phonics; so that it will become a hindrance to the child instead of an aid.

Some results which should be derived from phonic training are gained

from the study:

1. How to attack a word that is entirely new.

2. Methods of working out words as they become more and more difficult.

3. Learning a clue to names of new words.

Recommendations

Basing conclusions upon a conscientious review of the literature and an evaluation of various techniques the writer recommends that:

1. Phonics be used as a preparatory drill and not as an end in itself to aid the child in reading.

2. The teacher should always keep in mind that phonics may be used along with other clues for the recognition of words.

3. Training in phonics should be given before the child starts to work out his words by another method which he has acquired himself.

4. The teacher should form a good example of enunciating and pronouncing words correctly.

5. For first-grade work only the most simple phonograms should be taught which are encountered in the books which the child meets in his reading. This list can be acquired from the various assembled vocabularies, from first-grade tests, and from word lists.

6. Phonics and reading should be closely integrated.

7. Varied material and equipment should be used for the presentation of phonics.

8. The first lessons in phonics should be short in order to hold the interest of the children.

9. Drill should be according to the needs of each child.

10. Phonograms should be blended smoothly to produce the correct effects, such as "st" not "s-t," and "sh" not "s-h."

11. Phonics must not be overemphasized to the extent that comprehension is endangered.

12. Training in phonics should be well directed and guided to prove most beneficial.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Arthur, Grace, "A Quantitative Study of the Results of Grouping First Grade Classes According to Mental Age," Journal of Educational Research, 12:173-185, December, 1925.

Subject suggests content.

Atkins, Ruth E., "An Analysis of the Phonetic Elements in a Basal Reading Vocabulary," The Elementary School Journal, 26:596-606, 1926.

A scientific study of letter symbols in reading vocabularies.

"Better Reading Instruction," Research Bulletin of the National Education, 13:272-326, 1935.

Recent findings and improvements in reading. Many questions and problems which confront the teacher are asked and answered. This bulletin will aid teachers to measure their progress with others in the same field.

Betts, Emmett Albert, The Prevention and Correction of Reading Difficulties (Row, Peterson and Company, Evanston, Illinois, 1936), 402 pp.

Very good book on reading difficulties, handedness, eye-movements, hearing, emotional maladjustments, and corrections for each.

Birmingham, Anna I. and George Philip Krapp, First Lessons in Speech Improvement (Charles Scribner's Sons, New York, 1922), 214 pp.

Illustrative exercises for phonic drill.

Blanchard, Phyllis, "Reading Disabilities in Relation to Difficulties of Personality and Emotional Development," Mental Hygiene, 20:384-413, 1936.

Clinical work dealing with patients of school age who had difficulty in learning to read.

Briggs, Thomas H., and Coffman, "Phonics," Ch. IX in Reading in Public Schools (Row, Peterson and Company, Chicago, 1911), 332 pp.

Contains exercises and advantages of phonics.

Brooks, Fowler D., "Causes of Unsatisfactory Results in Reading," "Effective Silent and Oral Reading," and "How to Improve Oral Reading," Ch. II, X, and XIII in The Applied Psychology of Reading (D. Appleton and Company, New York, 1926), 278 pp.

Values and motives of silent and oral reading and when it should be introduced; remedial methods in oral reading explained; in-and out-of-school influences upon reading.

Buswell, Guy Thomas, "Fundamental Reading Habits: A Study of Their Development," Supplementary Educational Monographs (The University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, 1922), 150 pp.

A study of oral and silent reading. This book contains many tables and figures showing eye-movements.

Cabell, Elvira D., "Status of Phonics Today, I and II," Chicago School Journal, 13:370-378, 430-434, September 1930-June 1931.

Excellent articles on phonics giving the opinions and investigations of well known writers on this subject, also the ranking of phonics.

Cabell, Elvira D., "Status of Phonics Today, III," Chicago School Journal, 14:253-259, February, 1932.

This article compares the intrinsic and phonic methods effectively.

Cordts, Anna D., The Word Method of Teaching Phonics (Ginn and Company, Boston, 1929), 328 pp.

Cordts, Anna D., and M. McBroom, "Objectives in the Teaching of Phonics," "Methods of Teaching Phonics," "Research in the Teaching of Phonics," Ch. I, II, III in Classroom Teacher (The Classroom Teacher, Inc., Chicago, 1927), vol. II, 360 pp.

Currier, Lillian Beatrice, and Olive C. Duguid, "Phonics or No Phonics," Elementary School Journal, 17:286-287, 23:448-452, 1916 and 1923.

A five-year experiment in a New Hampshire school for determining the value of phonic training.

Dolch, Edward William, "Phonics," Ch. IV in The Psychology and Teaching of Reading (Ginn and Company, Boston, 1931), 261 pp.

Very good chapter on phonics explaining its usefulness in connection with reading.

Dolch, Edward William, and Maurine Bloomster, "Phonic Readiness," The Elementary School Journal, 37:161-240, 1937.

Explains the mental age when phonics should be presented to children.

Ducker, M., "The Development of a Meaningful Vocabulary and of Independence in Word Recognition," Twenty-Fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I (Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Illinois, 1925), 357 pp.

Ways and means of teaching children the recognition of words. Excellent material giving the latest findings on all phases of the subject of reading.

. . . . . ., "Principles of Method in Teaching Reading as Derived from Scientific Investigation," Ch. II in Eighteenth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part II, (Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Illinois, 1919).

An excellent study of factors influencing reading with special regard to their efficiency.

Elliott, Evelyn, Some Trends in Twentieth Century American Education as Reflected by a Survey of Primary Readers, Unpublished Master's Thesis, Kansas State Teachers College, Emporia, Kansas, 1932.

Subject suggests content.

Freeman, Frank N., "Reading: Perceptual Learning," Ch. IV in Psychology of Common Branches (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1916), 275 pp.

Shows relation of writing and language to reading. Illustrations of early reading and writing.

Garrison, S. C., and Minnie Taylor Heard, "An Experimental Study of the Value of Phonetics," Peabody Journal of Education, 9:9-14, July 1931-May 1932.

Phonic and non-phonic groups of bright and slow children experimented upon in reading and spelling.

Gates, Arthur I., "Studies of Phonetic Training in Beginning Reading," The Journal of Educational Psychology, 18:217-226, 1927.

An excellent study of the present evidence of the standing of phonic training and experiments on phonics and non-phonic training.

. . . . . ., "Types, Causes, and Further Diagnosis of Difficulties in Word Recognition," "Characteristics of Remedial Instruction," Ch. II, VI in The Improvement of Reading (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1927), 440 pp.

. . . . . ., "Phonetic Methods in Theory and Practice," Ch. IV in New Methods in Primary Reading (Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City, 1928), 236 pp.

Explains thoroughly phonic development and how it should be used in the classroom.

. . . . . ., "Problems in Beginning Reading," Teachers College Record, 26:572-591, September 1924-June 1925.

A representation of phonic methods in twenty-one courses of study.

Gates, Arthur I., and Eloise Boeker, "A Study of Initial Stages in Reading by Pre-School Children," Teachers College Record, 24:469-477, 1923.

An experiment carried on in a public school to find if the formation of letters causes difficulty in learning words.

Gates, Arthur I., and David H. Russell, "Types of Materials, Vocabulary Burden, Word Analysis, and Other Factors in Beginning Reading I," Elementary School Journal, 38:27-35, 1938.

An experiment based on school children in New York City to determine reading ability.

Gesell, Arnold, and Beatrice Chandler Gesell, "Phonics and Speech," Ch. XI in The Normal Child and Primary Education (Ginn and Company, Boston, 1912), 342 pp.

A study or theory of voice production in relation to speech habits.

Gray, William S., "Principles of Method in Teaching Reading as Derived from Scientific Investigation," Ch. II in The Eighteenth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Illinois, 1919).

An excellent study of factors influencing reading with special regard to their efficiency.

Gray, William S., "The Development of a Meaningful Vocabulary and of Independence in Word Recognition," Ch. IV in The Twenty-fourth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I (Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Illinois, 1925), 357 pp.

Methods of obtaining a rich vocabulary, methods as aids to word recognition and programs for developing the vocabulary.

Gunderson, Agnes G., "Simplified Phonics," The Elementary School Journal, 39:561-640, 1939.

Phonic training explained as it should be presented to the beginner in reading.

Hall, G. Stanley, "How to Teach Reading," in How to Teach Reading and What to Read in School, Part I (D. C. Heath and Company, Boston, 1908), 40 pp.

A short history of ways of teaching reading.

Holbrook, Richard T., "X-Ray Films of Speech-Articulations and Their Utility in Teaching," School and Society, 34:674-675, 1934.

Description of vocal sounds taken from speech films.

Horn, Ernest, "The Child's Early Experience with the Letter A," The Journal of Educational Psychology, 20:161-168, 1929.

Rationalizing words for spelling and reading using the letter A as a specific example.

Huey, Edmund Burke, "Present-Day Methods and Texts in Elementary Reading," "Learning to Read at School. The Early Period," Ch. V, VIII in The History and Pedagogy of Reading (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1915), 275 pp.

Laconic explanations of various methods, and when to introduce reading and various helpful methods of teaching beginners.

Hughes, James L., "The Phonic Method," Ch. V in Teaching to Read (The A. S. Barnes Company, New York, 1912), 126 pp.

A study of word recognition and the advantages and development of the phonic method.

Judd, Charles Hubbard, "Reading: Its Nature and Development," "Progress Through the Grades," Ch. VII in Supplementary Educational Monographs, 2:58-65, No. 4, 1918.

The subject of reading is discussed with reference to its introduction, method, word analysis, and rate of recognition.

Kendal, Calvin N., and George A. Mirick, How to Teach the Fundamental Subjects (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1915), 329 pp.

Methods and outlines of lessons in English to be taught from the first grade through the eighth grade.

Kilpatrick, William Heard, "The School Arts: Reading, Writing, and Arithmetic," Ch. VIII in The Montessori System Examined (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1914), 74 pp.

The method of teaching the academic subjects explained.

Lohmann, Elsa, "Phonics as Taught in Our First Grades Throughout the United States," Educational Method, 9:217-221, 1930.

Good excerpts from magazines and books criticising the teaching of phonics.

Meriam, J. L., "Avoiding Difficulties in Learning to Read," Educational Method, 9:412-419.

Describes different activities which may be participated in by pupils learning to read.

Monroe, Marion, and Bertie Backus, "General Principles of Diagnosis of Reading Disabilities," "General Principles of Remedial Instruction in Reading," Ch. II, III in Remedial Reading (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1937), 171 pp.

The reading program as carried on in Washington, D. C., schools.

Montgomery, Catharine, Graded Phonics for First and Second Grades (State Normal School, Bellingham, Washington, 1906), 23 pp.

An excellent illustrated teacher's manual for teaching phonics in the first two grades.

Mosher, R. M., "Some Results of Teaching Beginners by the Look-and-Say Method," Journal of Educational Psychology, 19:185-193, 1928.

A study made to discover the usefulness of the Look-and-Say method.

McKee, Paul, "The Program in Comprehension for First Grade," Ch. VI in Reading and Literature in the Elementary School (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1934), 591 pp.

Excellent material for teachers of reading, dealing with reading in the first year of school.

McKee, Paul, "Vocabulary Development," The Thirty-Sixth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education (Public School Publishing Company, Bloomington, Illinois, 1937), 442 pp.

Explains various ways of recognizing word elements. Much stress placed upon phonics.

Norton, John K., and Margaret Alltucker Norton, "Reading," Ch. VII in Foundations of Curriculum Building (Ginn and Company, Boston, 1936), 599 pp.

The subject of reading fully discussed with reference to reading periods, when it should begin, scientific investigations, importance of, and other phases related to reading.

O'Brien, John Anthony, "Reading Difficulties, Their Diagnosis and Remedial Treatment by Clinical Method," Ch. IX in Reading, Its Psychology and Pedagogy (The Century Company, New York, 1926), 308 pp.

A very good book on the causes of poor reading and some methods for overcoming this difficulty.

Parker, Samuel Chester, "How to Teach Beginning Reading," Elementary School Journal, 22:15-30, 104-17, 176-88, 255-68, 1921.

Discussion of method for teaching reading to beginners, and various devices used.

Pennell, Mary E., and Alice M. Cusack, "How the Child Can Be Helped to Use the Tools of Reading Effectively," Ch. VII in How to Teach Reading (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1923), 298 pp.

An excellent chapter on the use of tools in reading stressing the value of and training in phonics.

. . . . . ., "Specific Helps for the Kindergarten and First Grade," Ch. VI in The Teaching of Reading for Better Living (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1935), 469 pp.

Methods and suggestions to be used in preparing for reading and actual reading activities.

Pyle, William Henry, "Reading," Psychology of Common Branches (The Maple Press Company, York, Pennsylvania, 1930), 391 pp.

The integration of subjects in the curriculum explained.

Schmitt, Clara, "Developmental Alexia: Congenital Word-Blindness, or Inability to Learn to Read," The Elementary School Journal, 18:757-769, September 1917-June 1918.

Case study and experiments of children who were low in reading ability.

Scripture, E. W., Stuttering, Lisping, and the Control of Speech of the Deaf (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1916), 275 pp.

Instructions given for the treatment of speech defects.

Sexton, Elmer K., and John S. Herron, "The Newark Phonic Experiment," The Elementary School Journal, 28:690-701, September 1927-June 1928.

A scientific study of the phonic and non-phonic methods as an aid to reading.

Smith, Nila B., "The Construction of First Grade Reading Material," Journal of Educational Research, 28:79-89, 1928.

Various methods used for deciphering words. Six aims out of a list of twenty-five are given with ways of meeting these aims.

Smith, Nila Banton, American Reading Instruction (Silver, Burdett, and Company, New York, 1934), 387 pp.

Various methods of teaching reading analyzed.

Stone, Clarence R., Better Primary Reading (Webster Publishing Company, St. Louis, Missouri, 1936), 536 pp.

Very good on instruction for various reading levels.

Stone, Clarence R., "Teaching Reading in the Primary Grades," Ch. III in Silent and Oral Reading (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1920), 308 pp.

Aims and methods of teaching oral and silent reading with illustrated exercises.

Storm, Grace E., and Nila B. Smith, "Phonetic Analysis and Word Recognition," Ch. X in Reading Activities in the Primary Grades (Ginn and Company, Boston, 1930), 376 pp.

Phonics is described according to the aid and value in teaching. Investigations in this field are analyzed and teaching methods are explained.

Tate, Harry L., "The Influence of Phonics on Silent Reading in Grade I," The Elementary School Journal, 37:721-812, 1937.

An experiment conducted in the Chicago schools to find results obtained from phonic and non-phonic training.

Taylor, Joseph S., "Methods of Teaching Reading," Ch. V in Principles and Methods of Teaching Reading (The Macmillan Company, New York, 1912), 238 pp.

A history of reading methods and ways of teaching reading through the sixteen grades.

Unsicker, Cecilia E., and Cecile Flemming, "Remedial Instruction and Aid to Effective Study," Teachers College Record, 34:398-413, 1933.

Remedial teaching as it is done in Horace Mann School.

Vogel, Mabel, Emma Jaycox, and Carleton Washburne, "A Basic List of Phonics for Grade I and II," The Elementary School Journal, 23:436-443, 1923.

An investigation made by the Winnetka School as to the importance of letter groupings in phonics.

Vogel, Mabel, and Carleton Washburne, "A Year of Winnetka Research," Journal of Educational Research, 17:90-101, 1928.

An analysis of the Winnetka school system with special reference given to subjects, finance, and efficiency.

Washburne, Carleton, "The Commonest Syllables," Journal of Educational Research, 14:199-205, 1926.

A statistical study of syllables made by first and second-grade Winnetka teachers.

Washburne, Carleton, "Individual Primary Reading," Ch. V in Adjusting the School to the Child (World Book Company, New York, 1932), 189 pp.

An individual method of teaching the Winnetka system of reading with and without Winnetka materials.

Watkins, Emma, "Phonics," Ch. XXX in How to Teach Reading to Beginners (J. B. Lippincott Company, Philadelphia, 1922), 183 pp.

A short study of points to be emphasized in phonics as a teaching method.

Watson, Alice E., "Experimental Studies in the Psychology and Pedagogy of Spelling," "Studies in Methods of Teaching Spelling," Ch. V in Columbia University Contributions to Education (Bureau of Publications, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York City, 1935), No. 638, 144 pp.

Subject suggests content.

Wheat, Harry Grove, "Reading in the First Grade," Ch. XII in The Teaching of Reading (Ginn and Company, Boston, 1923), 346 pp.

Phonic analysis fully explained with interesting exercises for word knowledge in reading.

Wilson, Frank T., Cecile Flemming, Agnes Burke, and Charlotte G. Garrison, "Reading Progress in Kindergarten and First Grade," The Elementary School Journal, 38:401-480, 1938.

An excellent experiment preparing and observing children during their first two years in school.

Witty, Paul A., and David Kopel, "Preventing Reading Disability: the Reading Readiness Factor," Educational Administration and Supervision, 22: 400-31ō, 1936.

Reading problems of first-grade teachers and possible reasons for failure in first-grade work.

. . . . . ., "The Place of Phonetics in a Reading Program," Educational Administration and Supervision, 23:321-334, 1937.

A helpful article on the present trends, history of, and the place it holds in the reading program.

Manuals

Dopp, Katharine E., May Pitts, and S. C. Garrison, Happy Road to Reading (Rand McNally and Company, Chicago, 1935), 88 pp.

Elson, William H., Lyra E. Runkel, and William S. Gray, The Elson Basic Readers (Scott, Foresman and Company, Chicago, 1930), 144 pp.

Fassett, James H., and Charles H. Norton, Beacon Reading (Ginn and Company, Chicago, 1922), 184 pp.

Firman, Sidney G., and Ethel Maltby Gehres, The New Winston First Reader (The John C. Winston Company, Chicago, 1928), 164 pp.

Hahn, Julia Letheld, Child Development Readers (Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, 1935), 168 pp.

Hardy, Marjorie, The Child's Own Way Series (Wheeler Publishing Company, Chicago, 1931), 355 pp.

Johnson, Eleanor M., Child-Story Readers (Lyons and Company, Chicago, 1927).

Pennell, Mary E., and Alice M. Cusack, The Children's Own Readers (Ginn and Company, Boston, 1929), 178 pp.

Treadwell, Harriette Taylor, and Margaret Free, Reading-Literature First Reader (Row, Peterson and Company, Chicago, 1911), 134 pp.

Courses of Study

Arizona, Course of Study in Reading and Spelling for the Common Schools, State Board of Education, 1920, 24 pp.

California, Bakerfield, Course of Study, Reading, City Schools, 1931, 46 pp.

California, Berkeley, Course of Study Monographs, Reading and Phonics, The Public Schools, Berkeley, California, 1924, 104 pp.

California, Long Beach, Course of Study for Kindergarten and Grades One, Two, and Three, Long Beach Schools, 1930, 164 pp.

California, Los Angeles, Course of Study, Kindergartens, First and Second Grades; Language, Arts, Reading and Numbering, Los Angeles City School District, 1922, 88 pp.

Colorado, Denver, Courses of Study in Arithmetic and Reading for the Slow-Learning, Public Schools, 1930, 209 pp.

Kansas, Course of Study for the Elementary Schools of Kansas, Kansas State Printing Plant, Topeka, 1932, 528 pp.

Oklahoma, Oklahoma City, Tentative Reading Course of Study, Oklahoma City Public Schools, July, 1936-1938, 107 pp.

New Jersey, Atlantic City, Course of Study, Atlantic City Public Schools, 1926, 141 pp.

New Jersey, Trenton, Elementary Course of Study, Reading and Literature, Public Schools, Trenton, 1928, 212 pp.

South Dakota, A Course of Study for Rural and Graded Elementary Schools of South Dakota, Educator Supply Company, Mitchell, South Dakota, 1933, 492 pp.

Virginia, Tentative Course of Study for Virginia Elementary Schools, 1934, 59 pp.

Virginia, Richmond, Course of Study in Reading for Elementary Grades, School Board of the City of Richmond, Virginia, 1929, 38 pp.

INDEX