Setting up a developmental program for the intermediate grades of Ludington area Catholic school

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SETTING UP A DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM
FOR THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES OF
LUDINGTON AREA CATHOLIC SCHOOL

by

Sister Mary Carlos Knight, R.S.M.

A RESEARCH PAPER
SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE
REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF
MASTER OF ARTS IN EDUCATION (READING SPECIALIST)
AT CARDINAL STRITCH COLLEGE

Milwaukee, Wisconsin
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This research paper has been approved by the Graduate Committee of the Cardinal Stritch College by

Sister Maria Collette
(Adviser)

Date March 1971
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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

In 1885, Lowell wrote, "Reading is the key that enables us to see with the keenest eyes, hear with the finest ears, and listen to the sweetest voices of the ages."¹ This task, though difficult, is important as:

Reading is a golden key because, in essence, it opens the door to endless opportunities. You can live a thousand lives and do a thousand things if you can read a thousand books. But the key is golden only to the degree that it is usable. Reading is a golden key only when one can learn to read effectively to accomplish a variety of goals and purposes.²

Reading teachers have realized how difficult the reading process is for man. Today's society requires people who can read. There hasn't been a generation that has had to face as many rapid and complete changes in all phases of life as today's.

Regardless of the structure of future curricula, reading will always be important. Ross comments, a sound program will, therefore, produce competent readers and the more competent readers a society has,


the greater will be its capacity for doing good to itself. Schools must shoulder the responsibility of presenting the necessary instruction in reading so that the child can read effectively and can accomplish a variety of goals and purposes. If the school doesn't make these provisions, "The child is being deprived of a fundamental human right to gain further education, to gain access to one of the most invaluable instruments for learning." It has been said, "Learning is living and living is learning." Schools must develop readers who will love to read, want to read, and who have acquired the skills that will enable them to be successful readers.

Statement of the Problem

The purpose of this study was to organize a developmental program for the Intermediate Grades of the Ludington Area Catholic School. This study was mainly concerned with the professional improvement of personnel and adequate reading materials to meet the needs of the program.

1Totsie Ross, "Basic Considerations in a Junior High School Reading Program", in Jack Allen Figurel, ed., Vistas In Reading (Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Convention, Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1967), p. 205.


3Ibid.
Scope and Limitations

The study included approximately 114 students in the fourth, fifth, and sixth grades in the Ludington Area Catholic School. This school is located in the Diocese of Grand Rapids, Michigan on the shores of Lake Michigan. The school population consists of families that are of the lower middle class. The majority of the parents have completed their high school education and a few have college degrees.

This study was limited to the developmental reading program of the intermediate grades in the Ludington Area Catholic School. In-service meetings and the materials that will be necessary to successfully carry out the program will depend largely on the school budget. For the most part the writer has attempted to limit the review of research to the past ten years.

Significance

Research has shown that the ability to read well is a very important skill today. Schools must have a well-developed program to meet today's reading needs. It was hoped that this paper would provide some realistic assistance and appropriate help to the teachers of reading in the intermediate grades of this parochial school.

Summary

In the introduction the writer explained the necessity of reading and the tremendous responsibility that the school has to offer a solid reading program. The statement of the problem included its significance, scope, and limitations.
CHAPTER II
REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Developmental Program

Necessity of a developmental program. -- A reading program may be likened to a wheel revolving around the teacher, the hub. To make sure a smooth, uninterrupted journey is provided many spokes are needed. These spokes are the skills of reading which become stronger with each succeeding year. The thumpety-thump of uneven growth or the squeaking of unused parts causes a rather unpleasant ride for some children. Finally the organization provides the rim on which the program keeps rolling forward.¹ A school system has the duty to provide for pupil development through reading and to see that there is a continuous growth in the various skills of this art.

The development of reading closely parallels human development in general. It includes the child's total growth. A child's reading development is the result of his biology and his culture. Reading is a comprehensive part of the panoramic educational program. It

shares the obligation for communicative development with the other linguistic and artistic activities. It is a program in which everyone involved must have a positive concern. The program must be flexible, continuous, and comprehensive. It must be administered conscientiously so that every pupil can maintain maximum progress at his own individual pace. Reading instruction and the progress of each individual is not prescribed by a calendar. Grade limits and mass instruction in reading are no longer emphasized but rather the necessity for meeting individual pupil needs.\(^\text{1}\) Smith and Dechant say:

> because the child is a developing organism, schools must adjust instruction to the child's developmental needs. The school must help the child become ready and also provide the child with the opportunity to learn the skills needed, to satisfy his needs for reading as he advances. The program must satisfy, extend, and enrich the child's interests. To be successful the program must be based on pupil interest. It must be planned for both vertical and horizontal growth.\(^\text{2}\)

The above educators point out the parallels between the development of reading and human development.

**Definition of a developmental program.** -- Bush and Harelener define a developmental program as one having a sequential pattern of the reading skills needed at each level from initial reading instruction through the junior year in college. It includes the habits, skills, attitudes, and appreciations characteristic of the good reader. Any student may be termed a good


\(^{2}\)Ibid., p. 379.
reader when he has achieved the highest level of reading skill of which he is currently capable and at the same time use his reading skills effectively for personal reasons. A well rounded program provides individual and integrated learning experiences that lead them to read for various purposes such as recreation, information, and utilization.¹

Umans says that a developmental program has to be a continuous sequential program of reading instruction, and should reinforce and extend those desirable reading skills and appreciation as they are needed to comprehend and enjoy advanced and complex forms of written communication.²

Witty defines a developmental program as one that has continuous systematic instruction, the utilization of interests, the fulfillment of developmental needs, and the relationship of experiences in reading to other types of worthwhile activity.³

Spache observes that whatever a developmental reading program purports to be, its organizational pattern must include a definition of common reading goals, as well as those for each content field, and that every member of the school faculty must be aware of these goals.⁴ All of these definitions stress the necessity for sequential instruction, provision for individual differences, the teaching of content skills and time for independent reading so that the pupils will want to extend their


reading interests. It is not the goal of educators simply to teach the child to read since acquiring this skill would be worthless if the skill were not put to good use. One author made the comment that a reader "... is not a person who can read: he is a person who does read."¹

There is necessity for a developmental program since statistics prove that there are sixteen million Americans that are functional illiterates. They cannot read above the fourth grade level. Eight million adults over twenty-five cannot read the equivalent of a daily newspaper. Twenty-five percent of the students in the elementary grades cannot read as well as their potentials would indicate they should. Fifteen percent of our high school graduates are seriously handicapped readers.²

Reading specialists are concerned with this high percentage of poor readers. Austin has stated that "If greater emphasis were placed upon improved teaching of the developmental aspects of the reading program, many a potential problem could be prevented."³ A good developmental reading program should provide reading that will influence the whole development of the child. The program must provide not only for educational growth but also help the child form his personal values and develop social habits and attitudes that will encourage good citizenship.


This is important as Councill says: "Failing to read adequately produces a variety of forms of educational and personality maladjustments."\(^1\) Sartain says that "modern organizational patterns should be based on the recognition that the child's self-concept is of vital importance in motivating learning and in setting ceilings on learning."\(^2\) Sartain further believes the heart of the program is the interaction between human beings, the teacher and the pupil.\(^3\) This is why it is important for teachers to realize that the reading program must first of all be person-oriented rather than material oriented.

In determining the selection of the pattern or patterns for reading instruction the educational, philosophy, organization, and size of the school system, the quality of its administrative and teaching personnel; the availability of services, the type of available reading personnel, resources, and facilities; and the range of abilities to be served all have to be considered before the adoption of a reading program.\(^4\)

The frame of a reading program is less important than what goes into the program. The success of the program will depend upon cooperation between the administration and the teachers to solve the reading problem.


\(^3\) Ibid., p. 211.

A program that is forced upon a faculty will never succeed as it has to develop from a need. In the reading program a "total approach" is needed in which the best materials, methods, organizational plans, and in-service education can be unified. As a child grows older he develops a variety of interests. Therefore, as he advances in school, the reading program should provide greater flexibility, more variety of materials and procedures to meet his needs as a growing child. Planning in reading is difficult as each child follows his own unique developmental path in reading. The children in the intermediate grades will make rapid progress if they are given the necessary time to grow and if they are provided with favorable learning conditions.\(^1\) The reading work of the intermediate grades falls rather clearly into three categories.

All common skills must be taught but they differ widely in function such as: 1.) Extending skills, 2.) Reading in content areas, 3.) Personal reading. The student needs wise guidance in all three categories. Classroom work needs to be organized and scheduled so as to permit groups and individual help and encouragement.\(^2\)

We should build an atmosphere of trust and respect into the program. The child must have a feeling that he is important and valued for himself. The classroom should become a workshop where the child will be able to develop according to his capacity. Children


\(^2\)Tremonti, p. 24.
who learn in this type of environment rarely lose their excitement for learning.

**Approaches in Reading Instruction**

**Basal Reader.**—The reading program in many schools today is based on the basal reader approach. This type of program provides a well developed sequential organization of skills in comprehension and word study. The program is arranged in such a way that individual differences can be met. Usually the format and story are excellent. A large variety of stories to satisfy all interests is available. Much research has been completed to tell us that the readers should be revised to meet with the children's own language patterns and many publications are cooperating with the result of research. The basal readers even though used in many school systems have their weak points also. The teacher using this approach might tend to make this the whole program. The children might be forced to follow the design of the book rather than have the book adjusted to their developmental patterns. It would be very difficult to find a series that could be adjusted to everyone. This weakness can be overcome to some extent if the teacher uses the materials correctly. Most readers are set up to provide a wide variety of reading activities which the pupils can use both in and out of school. It is up to the teacher to make possible wide reading and to work towards a flexible program.

**Individualized.**—The important aspect of a developmental program is the necessity of realizing that every person is an individual
and that every individual is different, therefore grouping children may not always be the answer. Some educators have decided that to meet these individual needs an individualized program is the only answer. The individualized reading program can be summarized in this quotation. "No two children in this classroom have the same education. We are a company of independent scholars." Durrell realizes that there are certain skills and topics that have to be learned but they need not be presented in the same way, or with the same materials. Those participating in the individualized method of reading have to have a large quantity of books available to select from. Children are allowed to choose their own readers. The teacher arranges interviews with the children and at this time checks their comprehension. The students are given instruction according to their needs. As the teacher discovers the areas of difficulties, small groups may arise needing special help. The greatest advantage of this program is that it strengthens the interest of the children and gives them a feeling of success. However, there are some weaknesses in the approach. Individualization requires a great deal of the teacher's time. There could also be a lack of organization in the presentation of several basic skills. Durrell feels that

to prescribe a balanced reading program is to favor the production of uniform minds instead of freeing the intellect to encourage the variant approaches needed for progress. Let controlled societies prescribe balanced reading programs, but let us seek individual

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specialized programs, to provide a rich supply of intellectual variation.¹

Design and management of an individualized unbalanced reading curriculum requires great professional competence, perhaps more than can be expected from teachers trained through uniform instruction in academic and professional courses. But in this stone age of education, variations of approach are desired if we are to increase the amount and quality of learning in the classrooms. Perhaps taking the road toward diversity rather than toward balance will provide a more effective education for a free society.² This approach is becoming popular throughout the nation but there hasn't been a well-organized study to prove that this method is better than another method.

Combined. -- Some schools are trying to take the excellent points of the individualized and basal programs and combine the two methods. This according to Blakely and McKay seems to be the best program. They say

It seems that a defensible program in reading will combine the best features of both individual and group instruction. A defensible reading program recognizes the value of systematic instruction, utilization of interests, fulfillment of developmental needs and the articulation of reading experience with other types of worthwhile activities.³

A few schools use the individualized program for twelve weeks and then

¹Ibid., p. 133.
²Ibid., p. 133.
³Paul W. Blakely and Beverly McKay, "Individualized Reading as Part of An Eclectic Reading Program." Elementary English, XLIII (March, 1966), p. 215.
switch over to the basal series. Other schools use the basal reader in combination with the individualized program. As interest, tastes, and special needs arise, groups are formed. The library serves as the main avenue for fostering independent reading. Gray and Witty best summarize the role of basal readers in individualized reading instruction. In their judgment a successful reading program

... lies not in the adoption of a so-called single package solution but in the development of a flexible pattern which utilizes the advantages of both group and individualized instruction and the use of both common and diversified materials. The basal text will be used and adopted as a dependable guide and as an efficient plan for insuring the acquisition of basic skills... It is necessary therefore, for teachers to select basal materials as the core and to use them judiciously to meet individual and group needs.¹

Organizational Grouping

Any reading program that considers the interests and abilities of all the students must consider variety in grouping. Harris believes that:

... it is reasonable to expect that no one way of organizing the class will serve all the students equally well. A well rounded reading program includes different kinds of class organization, each used for what it is best suited.²

Since the range of abilities is so large in the intermediate grades, grouping to a certain degree will narrow this range. There are many grouping plans that can be used in these grades.

1. Homogeneous Grouping— all the children in the room are of the


²Albert Harris, How to Increase Reading Ability (New York: David McKay Company, 1961), p. 110.
same mental ability.

2. Heterogeneous Grouping- the children are of various mental abilities but arranged in ability reading groups within the classroom.

3. Dual Progress Plan- this plan was developed by Stoddard. During one half of the day, the children are grouped in a heterogeneous manner while they are instructed in the language arts and social studies by one teacher and they take physical education from another. During the other half of the day they are grouped in achievement levels in each subject, using the Joplin plan. The studies that are pursued are math, science, music, and art and they are under the direction of master teachers.¹

4. Team teaching- all the teachers are involved in the total instructional program. Usually the team will include pupils of the same age or grade level consisting of about twenty-five to thirty pupils times the number of teachers in the team. The whole group comes together and the master teacher presents a basic skill. After the presentation the whole group divides up into smaller groups. Teachers are guided in working with smaller groups to enrich the presentation of the master teacher.

5. Joplin plan- children are grouped according to their reading ability. For example in the intermediate grades all children disregarding their grade are assigned to a particular room during the reading

¹Bush and Harelener, p. 219.
period. All the teachers involved in these grades teach reading at the same time.

6. Individualized Grouping- each student progresses according to his own ability and at his own rate.

Considering the various patterns of grouping, it must be remembered that "grouping plans, at best, only narrow the range of abilities. This is the basic premise under which any and all grouping plans should operate." Administrators must remember that children have different needs and they cannot be grouped on the basis of academic achievement only. The writer found that although educators agree that grouping of one type or another is an accepted practice today, research gives no conclusive results as to the best type. Grouping should always be flexible and adjusted to the situation. It would be beneficial to have the children in a variety of groups such as performance grouping, inquiry grouping, interest grouping, particular needs grouping, and team grouping. The children involved in several groups will be able to be reached in an individual manner in an easier way. The school must provide a home base, but allow a variety of groups to exist. After grouping has been decided upon, the results will be determined by what the teacher does after the group is formed.

Materials

Once the philosophy and the reading program have been decided,

\[\text{Ibid.}, \ p. \ 141.\]
the choosing of materials will be the next step. In deciding materials
to be used there are some questions to keep in mind.

1. What are the weak and strong points of the materials?
2. Will this material fit within the framework of our program, provid-
ing for the needs of the slower, average, and better children?
3. Will the materials work within our budget range?
4. Will the teachers be able to work with the materials?
5. Will the materials meet the interests of the children?\(^1\)

Administrators must remember that there are two ways in which
materials can be misused. First, good materials can be used in the
wrong way. Second, the whole class can be given one assignment
which is only feasible for a small group to do.\(^2\) The materials that
are to be chosen must be used with understanding and planning. The
writer believes it would be wise to use a variety of materials which
would enable individualized instruction to be given.

**Library**

One of the aims of a good developmental program is to develop
independent readers, readers who will want to read. In order to ac-
complish this goal a school must have a library that the children can
frequent when they desire. The importance of a school library is

\(^1\)Ibid., p. 352.

\(^2\)Ibid., p. 353.
stressed in Stauffer's statement that the "Library is the heart of a school and all arteries lead to it."\(^1\) The American Library Association recommends that any school having 200-500 students have a library consisting of seating space for forty-five to fifty-five. There should be 6,000 - 10,000 books on the shelves; 120 magazine subscriptions should be available. The library should be given three to five percent of the total school budget for software and the same amount for hardware. A section of the library should consist of professional materials for the teachers.\(^2\) To have a well-equipped library and not have the materials circulating defeats the purpose of a library. Therefore, a full-time librarian and one full-time clerk are necessary. Having someone in the library constantly will give the teachers the opportunity to use this room as reference and enrichment for their classes. A library is the only facility that can really allow every student an opportunity to develop his reading powers to the fullest degree.\(^3\) The belief of many educators is that the library is a place for people to come and learn a new and beautiful world that they might never have had the opportunity


to enter. 1 It is in this room that the student will cultivate the magic key of interest which is important to successful reading. This interest will also stimulate the child to want to read for useful reasons. The child must come to feel that there is a real heritage in literature that will help him to live and to grow. He must know the realistic and the fanciful, the old and new in both prose and verse. He must come to appreciate the beauty in language and the importance of refined expressions. He must come in contact with materials that are directly functional and those that serve his own immediate purposes. Reading is an acquired ability which children can use both in school and out. Independent reading is not a single method or technique, but a broader way of thinking about reading. 2 Today, education is too involved and the scope so large that instruction cannot exist only within the boundaries of a classroom. The library must be a center for learning and activity.

Audio-visual materials must be accessible for use by the children. Film-strip projectors, controlled readers, SRA Reading Laboratories, tape recorders and listening stations, speed readers and all materials that accompany each item should be displayed in such a manner that they can easily be used.

To supplement the central library, each classroom should have a

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library within its walls. The classroom library should be fluid, and not fixed collections.\(^1\) It is necessary for the children to be able to go to the classroom shelves and just browse among the books, choosing what they desire. A classroom library can be arranged and books chosen for the personal needs of the individual students of that room. Books should be available that would attract all the children's interests, dreams and desires. If this is made possible, a love of reading will be born and curiosity aroused. A classroom library should consist of at least 100 books at all times. It would be advisable to have at least half of these books remain in the classroom and the other portion be on a rotating basis. The collection should include books that are above and some below the grade level.\(^2\) A classroom library would be most helpful for the reluctant reader. This reader needs to be encouraged and helped to discover the vast world of books. In the homey atmosphere of the classroom this can be accomplished. Books provided in the central and classroom libraries should be those consisting of a variety of reading levels, sizes, subjects, authors, and appealing book formats and illustrations. The program has to provide the time and example before reading can become part of each student. Therefore, the classroom should be organized and equipped in such a manner that it provides the atmosphere of a learning laboratory. Children engaged in a variety

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\(^2\) Bush and Harelener, p. 199.
of activities such as research, interest, group and individual reading show that real learning is taking place. In this atmosphere learning in all areas is a part of living. Learning in this room can be accomplished by all students because the visual and auditory senses can be used.¹

In-Service

The positive attitude of the learner is likened to the apex of a pyramid and must be built upon a solid foundation. This solid foundation, without which there can be no pyramid, and certainly no learning, is a strong, well-fortified self-image.²

One purpose of an in-service program is to provide teachers with a "fortified self-image." This is important because a reading program may have the latest and best materials, most up to date building, and a healthy budget but if know-how among the faculty and administration is lacking the program may be a failure. To initiate a new program doesn't mean that excellence will result; to produce an excellence the program must be a "product of a coordinated, thoughtful, continual, total staff activity."³

A teacher may have everything available to make a reading program successful but if she doesn't know how to use these materials, organize, and plan her time failure can develop. "The heart of the educational process is the


³Morton Botel, "We Need a Total Approach to Reading," The Reading Teacher, XLLL (April, 1960), p. 10.
instruction between human beings, the teacher and the pupil." ¹ To foster a good reading program, well-organized in-service training for teachers would be necessary. The reading program will be no better than the people who are to teach in this particular situation. The teacher is the one who will provide the key to open the door. She is the person who works closely with the students. To accomplish her goal she must accept each person where he is and for what he is worth. She should arrange her teaching to meet each individual's needs, interests, and abilities. She must be willing to accept and experiment with new ideas and procedures.² The teacher who knows books and children can bring about unity between the two in such a way that this harmony permits the book to speak to the child deep down where he really lives, feels, and thinks."³

Surround a child in a pleasant, comfortable place with hundreds of exciting books and give him time. Add one thing more— a knowledgeable, sensitive teacher—and the child can hardly fail to be taught for a lifetime. Teachers who are wise have certain basic understandings. Their job is not to cram children's heads with facts but rather to involve them in the process of learning.⁴

¹Sartain, p. 198.


³Olive S. Niles, Council Program Aids Lifetime Interests in Reading (Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1968), p. 8.

⁴Ibid., p. 8.
There are some things that are learned better alone, others with a teacher, and some only in an appropriate group.¹ There are many types of in-service training such as workshops, seminars, group discussions, course-work, conferences, departmental meetings, research, and grade level meetings. In-service programs provided during the actual school year can accomplish a great deal because the problems that are being met daily can actually be worked out together at this time thus providing for a more personal course of action.

The purpose of a reading in-service program should be to obtain new ideas in order to improve skills and techniques in the teaching of reading thus resulting in improved instruction in the classroom. If this result is not produced, an in-service program is of little value. To be most effective, an in-service program must develop from the needs of the teachers. Social scientists have repeatedly stated that the success of an in-service program will depend upon the degree that the teachers themselves identify their problems. Only when the teachers discover their own difficulties and want to do something about them can an effective in-service education program exist.² The common area of interest of the group must be the center of this training program. In the beginning, the goals and outcomes should be clarified. It will be important to base everything on the classroom teachers' instructional problems


in reading. A flexible arrangement with variety is necessary.

It is important that teachers continuously grow in their profession.
"In-service education is one of the crucial keys to successful improvement of the educational program in reading in the elementary schools."¹ Not enough stress can be placed upon the necessity of improving the developmental feature of the reading program. If this were done, many reading disabilities could be prevented. The in-service program is of the utmost importance because "intermediate grade teachers need the opportunity to review, reassess, expand, and fully understand the scope and interrelatedness of the total reading program in these grades with emphasis upon effective teaching of the various components of the reading process."² Herber says: "that professional improvement should be considered as much a part of the teacher's responsibility as teaching and that provision for this improvement should be as much a part of the district's responsibility as providing classrooms in which to teach."³ The following statement also emphasizes the necessity of in-service programs:

an important characteristic of a profession is that the members band together for stimulation and sharing of ideas and for the development of solidarity of interests and purposes..... When

¹DeCarlo and Cleland, "A Reading In-Service Education Program for Teacher." Reading Teacher XXII (November, 1968), p. 163.

²Ibid., p. 164.

professional needs are well identified, there can be a clear sense of direction and purpose, which is itself energizing. The process and products of successful cooperative action engender zest for continued teamwork. All the awareness of growth occurring lifts aspiration for still further professional development. ¹

Volunteer-Aides

"Aides provide extra pairs of hands to comfort, steady, reassure and perform the many tasks required to make available at the 'right' moment the materials of instruction that stimulate, clarify or re-enforce learning." ² Once volunteer-aides have a knowledge and love of children and know what the educational program consists of, they can become co-partners with the teacher in the teaching of reading.

"The para-professionals, or teacher-aides, are lay people with a varied amount of education and professional training who take an active part in assisting the teachers to discharge their professional duties in a more efficient and economical manner." ³ The necessity for the use of aides is twofold: 1) For the pupil, because it has been proven that quality education is to be individualized. 2) For the teacher, because the teacher's job consists of much time being applied to non-professional


work. The aide will release the professional teacher from non-professional work and can:

bring into the school the romance of travel, the rich pageant of history - both local and world - the delights of music and dance, the excitement of the business world, scientific discovery, the adventure of knowing people from other countries. These people can take over about thirty percent of what teachers do now. The time is past when education could move like a turtle with rheumatism. The present overtakes the future rapidly. Our times are times of exuberant energy, curiosity, and opportunity.¹

In organizing a teacher-aide program, it will be necessary to discuss with the intermediate grade teachers of the Ludington Area Catholic School the types of aides that would be desired, the expected goals and outcomes, training program, rules for the screening of aides, and evaluation procedures. It will be necessary to allow freedom to the intermediate teachers to choose if they desire a teacher-aide as this added person in the classroom will require a re-education for the teacher. Before the teacher can use this help to the fullest degree, she must see the need for the added personnel. Once the teachers and administrators have organized the program, aides have been screened and in-service training has been introduced the teachers will know their needs and how they can best make use of an aide. It will be each teacher’s responsibility to set up a working relationship with her volunteer. Flexibility and consistency should be the desired goal for teamwork. Avenues of communication should always be left wide open. An aide should never

be a substitute for the teacher. She is to aid, supplement and reinforce the teacher's instructions. Before the aide enters the classroom it is the responsibility of the teacher to prepare her students for the coming of this volunteer. There should be a clear understanding with the pupils of the aide's position of authority. It is very important that the aide is made to feel a part of the group. In one report given the aides were offered a ten hour in-service class by reading assistants. They were given a place to work and children to tutor. These aides were able to effect significant improvement in basic reading skills, especially in word recognition and phonics. The children tested above average improvement in oral reading.

The trend toward involving more people in the educational program is a healthy sign as this involvement will increase the feeling of confidence between the parent and school. This trend involving the lay citizens, particularly those who have been suspicious of the schools in the past, elicits more interest and commitment toward designing quality educational programs. This involvement is an increasing trend, but it is crucial that educators do not relinquish their professional leadership roles as meaningful changes in reading instruction are made.¹

**Testing**

The primary purpose of any testing program should be to improve the form of instruction and make easier the choice of grouping and

¹Nicholas P. Criscuolo, "Involvement: Key to Successful Reading Programs," *Elementary English*, XLII (March, 1970), p. 392.
materials that would make a successful reading program. Reading-test scores will aid the intermediate teacher to become more aware of the variety of reading differences within her individual classroom. Testing helps the school to decide which pupils will require special programs such as those in an accelerated, adapted, corrective or remedial group. Initiating a testing program without the staff fully understanding the use and interpretation of the tests used is useless. If the testing is not going to be used to improve instruction, it would be better not to administer the test. There are quite a few intermediate standardized tests in reading: 1) individual, 2) group, 3) oral, 4) essay, 5) objective, 6) speed, 7) power, 8) mastery, 9) verbal, 10) non-verbal, 11) performance, 12) survey, 13) and analytical or diagnostic. In choosing the test in a program there are some important factors to be considered:

1. **Validity.** -- The accuracy with which the test measures what it professes to measure.

2. **Reliability.** -- The consistency with which the test measures.

3. Be sure the manual accompanying the test be complete in directions of administration and scoring of the test. A complete history of the validity, reliability and limitations of the test should be included.

4. It would be wise to examine the children's records in the intermediate grades to see what tests they have had.

5. Examine carefully several sets of tests and choose the test that
applies to the needs of the intermediate grades the most perfectly. Be positive that the grade range of the test is what you desire.

The testing program should be beneficial to the teaching staff but also to the children for:

If children are to move in the direction of self-evaluation in order to set their own goals and to work toward their goals, they should know the purpose of the testing. They are then more inclined to do their best with the test items. The results are apt to be a truer picture of their performance.¹

Schools do face the problem of overtesting. Intelligence tests should not be given yearly. Standardized tests of reading should be given early when needed to help in evaluating the situation. Reading survey tests need not be administered yearly but a diagnostic achievement may help at the beginning of the school year.

Summary

The writer reviewed current literature which would be valuable in setting up a developmental program for the Intermediate Grades of Ludington Area Catholic School. Readings were selected which explained the necessity and definition of a developmental program. Different approaches, organizational plans, materials, in-service training for teachers and parents, appropriate testing measures were considered.

The major findings from these readings were:

1. A good developmental program has to have a solid foundation with

¹Bush and Harelener, p. 295.
a sequential development of reading skills built on preceding skills.

The program must be presented in a "panoramic pattern."\(^1\)

2. "All learning is an individual matter, but teaching is essentially individual guidance in group situations. Education is a jealous mistress, she demands individual attention."\(^2\) The reading program must have the function of serving distinctive needs in a systematic yet flexible manner.

3. "Reading, like talking and walking, should be an intrinsic part of the child's living.\(^3\) Reading should thus be presented in a manner that the child will not only be able to read but want to read and grow from his reading.

4. A combination of individual and the basal approach would be a desirable reading plan.

5. Although most educators agree that grouping of one type or another is an accepted practice today, research gives no conclusive results as to the best type. Each individual teacher must use what is best to meet the individual differences of the children in that school.

6. Many materials are available to be used in a reading program. The choice made will depend upon the philosophy and objectives of the reading program.

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7. A school today that is lacking library facilities is depriving the students of an important aspect of learning.

8. No matter what the framework of a school's program, its buildings or its budget, a school lacking personnel that really has the know-how of the program cannot successfully accomplish the objectives of the program in reading.

9. Parent involvement will help to bridge the gap between school and home.

10. Many reading tests are available to assist the staff and administration to organize and evaluate a reading program. It must be remembered that organization should not be based solely on testing results.
CHAPTER III

SETTING UP A DEVELOPMENTAL PROGRAM

FOR THE INTERMEDIATE GRADES OF

LUDINGTON AREA CATHOLIC SCHOOL

"All children grow, but not alike. One must be lifted, another must climb, a third is just tall enough to see for himself."¹ Very often a school's program will be organized to satisfy the needs of the child "Just tall enough" to see for himself and forget the essential needs of the other two children described by Martin.

Convinced of the obligation to meet the needs of all pupils, the writer of this paper has worked out a developmental program to be adopted by the intermediate grades of Ludington Area Catholic School.

Administration and faculty of the Ludington Area Catholic School believe that the whole child is to be instructed spiritually, physically, psychologically and socially according to his own individual needs. The goals of the intermediate reading program must of necessity flow from the school's philosophy.

Developmental Program

Goals and objectives have been worked out for the developmental reading program. The following goals seem most appropriate:

1. To begin where the child is and help him to progress as far and as fast as he is able;
2. to center the teaching of reading around the pupil and his needs;
3. to provide necessary encouragement for the learning of skills.

Specific objectives have also been established:

1. Meet the special needs of our students in grades four-six.
2. Make provisions for individual and small group instruction.
3. Aid in the formation of a good self-image.
4. Provide each student the opportunity to attain maximum progress according to his ability.
5. Provide the opportunity for each child to improve his reading skills.
6. Help each child form a desire to read as a pleasurable recreation.

The author of this paper was concerned primarily with a program for the intermediate grades because the primary reading program is already based on a solid foundation. With a stronger intermediate program the fourth, fifth, and sixth graders should continue to make rapid progress in reading.

Research proves that the higher the grade level the larger the span of reading ability. Because of this wide reading span in the intermediate
grades educators agree that grouping of one type or another is an acceptable practice today, though research does not give any conclusive results as to the best type. Each school must use what is best to meet the individual differences of the children. A trend that is being used often today in grouping in the intermediate grades is the "Joplin Plan". This is an effort to departmentalize homogeneously the intermediate grades that are self-contained. During one period each day the children from these rooms are regrouped on their ability to read, the higher group going to one teacher, the middle group going to a second, and the slow readers to a third irrespective of their grade level. ¹ This grouping results in narrowing the range of abilities in reading within the classrooms and should provide for individual needs. Each teacher has the responsibility to see that reading skills are carried into the content field.

Organizational Grouping

The intermediate grades in the Ludington Area Catholic School include 114 pupils and three full-time teachers: a religious sister with twenty years' teaching experience (fourth grade); a young man in his first year of teaching (fifth grade); a married woman with sixteen years' teaching experience (sixth grade). A remedial reading teacher

with a degree in reading comes every twelve weeks to help the slower children. Also involved in the intermediate grades is a retired sister with 45 years of experience who takes the slower children every day for individual or small group instruction.

In the fall of 1970, the Aptitude Achievement Test\(^1\) was administered to the Intermediate Grades. This battery of tests included a reading test. The reading test was divided into two sections but the results are combined to yield a single score. The first part consisted of items of straightforward comprehension and inference. The second part dealt with reading skills that focused on the main idea, supporting ideas, intended inference, application, and evaluation of logic.

The Aptitude Achievement program provides percentile scores: one based on a nation-wide sampling of pupils; the other, divided by grades, is based on all youngsters in a school and in a district. The national, district, and local percentiles of each student in the intermediate grades were plotted on a graph. Three graphs were prepared, one for each grade.

The fourth grade's graph showed each student's percentile ranking in the group, diocese and nation. In studying the graph it shows that some students rate at least two points above the grade norm in the diocese and some ten points above in the nation. The group as a whole rated lower in the diocese except between the 70th and 85th percentile where they were almost even. The difference between the diocesan

Grade 4

Number of Students 32

Diocese _____ x Diocese Mean
National _______ x Ludington Area Catholic School Mean
Ludington Area Catholic School ____ o
mean and the group mean was 2.2. The standard deviation had a difference of .5 points. The difference in the median of the two groups is 2.6.

The fifth grade graph gave only the group and diocesan rating. Looking at the results of the fifth grade, the writer found that the group ranked a few points higher on the diocesan level than it did on the local level. The difference in the two means is only 1.4. The standard deviation had a difference of .4.

The sixth grade results show the school in a positive light. Across the whole graph the percentiles in the diocese and nation would have been higher than they ranked in the local group. The mean for the diocese and the group is the same. The standard deviation had a difference of 2.8. The difference in the median of the two groups is 2.0.

This test showed definite reading skills that should be improved. Evaluation of logic and the finding of the main idea are the two dominant skills that need take most attention. A variety of other skills needed improvement but to a lesser degree.

Finding the skills that the groups needed work on, and studying the results of the Aptitude-Achievement Test, the writer wanted to administer another Reading Test that would give the reading level of each student. The California Achievement Test\(^1\) was administered since that test is

Graph 2

Grade 5

Number of Students 43

Diocese

Ludington Area Catholic School

x Diocese

o Ludington Area Catholic School
Grade 6

Diocese       ____
National      ____x
Ludington Area Catholic School  ____o

Number of Students  38

x  Diocese Mean.

x  Ludington Area Catholic School Mean
recognized as a valid and reliable tool in appraising the progress of pupils in the skills of vocabulary and reading comprehension. The California Test showed a wide ranged level of achievement; whereas some students were capable of reading on the eleventh grade level - still others were only at the first grade level. The table on the following page will show these results.

The writer believes that the Joplin Plan with the basal and individual approach would best meet the needs of the children in the intermediate grades of Ludington Area Catholic School. This program would reach all the children from the lowest level to the highest.

In-Service

To initiate such a program in the intermediate grades of Ludington Area Catholic School a great deal of in-service training must take place. Research and experience have shown that teacher training institutions are not providing artisans and artists in the field of reading. Many colleges require their future teachers to take only one reading course and some do not require any. In introducing a revised program in our intermediate grades, this writer sees the need for teachers to have a good knowledge of a developmental program. The first step in initiating the program is the formation of a steering committee to investigate the desired needs and interests of the teachers. A questionnaire will be distributed to the faculty requesting their ideas and needs for reading in-service meetings to achieve the goals of a developmental program. From the results of the questionnaire, the committee would be able to determine desired
**TABLE 1**

**CALIFORNIA ACHIEVEMENT TEST**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Range of Reading Levels</th>
<th>Range of Reading Levels</th>
<th>Range of Reading Levels</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grade 4</td>
<td>Grade 5</td>
<td>Grade 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.9</td>
<td>5.1</td>
<td>11.2</td>
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<td>8.3</td>
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<td>7.8</td>
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<td>6.3</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.7</td>
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<tr>
<td>5.6</td>
<td>1.4</td>
<td>9.2</td>
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</tbody>
</table>

N=32  N=36  N=37
goals and outcomes of the in-service meeting. The committee, with the administration and tallied questionnaires, can then plan for the first in-service meeting to prepare for the introduction of the intermediate reading program. The writer would suggest that for the first meeting a reading specialist who had previously seen the tallied questionnaires be invited to give an explanation and answer questions on the necessity of a well-developed reading program and the content of the program including readiness in the different skills of reading. At the end of the first meeting, the faculty would divide into work groups consisting of the primary, intermediate and junior-high levels and make plans for future in-service meetings. Though only the intermediate grades are immediately affected, it seems necessary to involve the entire staff in the planning.

One meeting would also have to be devoted to group planning and the evaluation of reading tests. Further meetings would be planned according to the results of the questionnaires.

Bi-weekly meetings with the intermediate grade teachers and administration would be necessary to check on the demonstration of a word recognition or comprehension skill would be presented mostly as a further help to the teachers. The writer would highly recommend that the staff be released to observe expert teachers in the field of reading.

After their in-service meetings on a developmental program the teachers should then be ready to move on to grouping the children. To successfully group each child according to his needs it would be necessary to evaluate the child's capability and his present achievement. The
faculty and administration would meet to examine the results of the tests. With these results and the teacher's own observations the children would be grouped into groups. The groups would remain flexible at all times. No child would remain within one group for a long period of time unless it was necessary. When the child no longer belonged in the group he had been placed in, he would be transferred to the next group that would best meet his needs.

**Materials**

The writer would suggest to her staff that a representative from the Macmillan Company be invited to speak on the strong and weak points in the Macmillan basal readers. The representative would also be requested to give a demonstration lesson from the Macmillan Series.

These materials will best fulfill this program because they reflect the philosophy and objectives of the Ludington Area Catholic School. The reader has a rich content that should be of interest to the student at each stage in his development. Provision is made to build a better understanding of good literature and to arouse the imagination. The ability to think seriously about what is read is provided and thus the student will be given something of value to carry away with him. The book is arranged in units in which a particular skill content theme is stressed. Exercises and information are provided for the skills the student must master. He is also made aware of why and what he is studying. A good review program is arranged in the final units of each reader. The readers are arranged according to levels and not grades.
Macmillan also publishes a *Clues to Words Handbook* which would be helpful as it contains seventy lessons. The handbook reviews phonics and syllabifications, strengthens skills for borderline pupils, and offers remedial help in specific areas for individual pupil needs. To accompany the basal reader, the teacher's guide, mastery tests for each reader, duplicating masters, and individual workbooks are necessary to complete a program.

The program is to include the individualized approach also. Directed reading would take place every day but in a different manner. Three days of the week would be spent in developmental enrichment activities and two days in individualized work. Developmental activities would include some activities built around the basal reader and the many enriched suggestions that come from this material.

**Library**

The library would be used for the individualized activities. A regular library period would be organized for each group during the week even though the children are free to go into the library at all times. To assist the librarian a student card will be available with the youngster's reading ability and the recorded books that he has read. This will guide the librarian in helping the youngster to broaden his reading interests. Membership in a book club would be encouraged to help each student build a library at home as well as in school. Besides having books

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available in the library, paperbacks will be exhibited in the halls and all-purpose room so the children will always have books accessible.

The two days that are occupied in individual work would be spent in the library or the family center that will be organized into a reading-learning room. This room can be arranged into one large or several smaller rooms. The SRA Labs1, Macmillan Spectrum of Skills2, Reader’s Digest Skill Builders3, EDL Study Skills Library4, workbook exercises, various games, drills learning and listening stations with the EDL Tapes would be available at all times. Parts of the large room would be divided so that the movie screen could be used with the film-strip, movie, or overhead projector whenever it is necessary. Another section of the room would have the controlled readers, speed pacers and other reading machines.

Also available would be a variety of other readers from different series such as Scholastic Curriculum Units5 for the middle grades, an organized but still a flexible program of study. This program consists

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3Reader’s Digest Skill Builders (Pleasantville, New York: Educational Division, 1965).


5Scholastic Curriculum Unit for Middle Grades (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Scholastic Magazine Inc., 1967).
of two hundred forty-seven titles ranging from kindergarten to the eighth grade. The Morgan Bay Mysteries Series\(^1\) consisting of eight books with an interest range of 4-10 and a reading level of 2.3-4.1 could be useful as an enrichment series.

The days that are scheduled for individualized readings will require a definite amount of teacher-pupil planning. The learning center will not aid in the educational growth of the children if it is not used in the proper manner. Each child as he enters the room should know what his goal and purpose is for that day.

**Volunteer-Aides**

The learning center will require the use of several aides. The aides will spend about seventy-five percent of their time working with individual students. The aides will also be secretarial assistants to the teachers and assist in planning the work for the days that will be used in individual activities.

The writer believes that parents need to become more directly involved in the school situation; therefore, volunteers for aides would be solicited from among the parents of the students by way of a notice in the church bulletin and the daily newspaper. Application forms would be made available with the opportunity to check the kind of work the applicant might prefer.

An orientation program for volunteers would have to be arranged.

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The orientation would include a talk on child development, a guided tour of the school facilities, and a get-together with the faculty. Specific job descriptions would also have to be explained.

After the aides had been assigned to their specific tasks the teachers would decide which aides they would like to assist them. Each teacher would be responsible for training aides in her own classroom. It will be the responsibility of each teacher to see that the lines of communication are open at all times.

Besides aides in the classroom, assistance in the learning center room would be needed. There would be aides available at all times to assist and give individual attention whenever it was required. The aides would be given in-service training on the use of the individual machines, workbooks and other materials. The Macmillan Tutorial System\(^1\) would be available for six different students throughout the school. Arrangements would be made for six tutors to come in and take these children for the required amount of time. The aides in the learning center would be taught how to keep exact records for all children attending. Library aides would be accessible to assist the children in making use of this facility.

Every two weeks the faculty, aides and principal should meet together to evaluate the progress of the program and make suggestions for improvements. Each teacher must plan with her aide daily. There would be the need for a continuous training program and constant evaluation in order to fulfill the aims and goals of the program.

Summary

The writer feels that the procedures described in the preceding pages of this chapter are all a vital part of a successful developmental program for the Intermediate Grades of Ludington Area Catholic School. In this developmental program provision was made for a well-balanced reading diet. Developmental, functional and recreational reading are all an intricate part of the program. The emphasis is placed upon the persons in the program and every student, teacher, parent and administrator shares in the responsibility for the success of the program. The writer has developed the best possible program with the existing resources and personnel for the Intermediate Grades of Ludington Area Catholic School.
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