Inquiry into the role of the remedial reading teacher and the reading consultant in selected elementary public school systems

Sharon Orzschowski

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AN INQUIRY INTO THE ROLE OF THE REMEDIAL READING
TEACHER AND THE READING CONSULTANT IN SELECTED
ELEMENTARY PUBLIC SCHOOL SYSTEMS

by
Sharon Orzechowski

A RESEARCH PAPER
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CHAPTER I

THE INTRODUCTION

Nature of Problem

A familiar proverb cautions: "A stitch in time saves nine." Yet some reading programs seemingly threw this caution to the wind and appear prone, instead, to emphasize solely various systems of remediation. Research has estimated that approximately ten to fifteen percent of today's student population may be classified as disabled readers and in need of remedial instruction. Some authorities, however, cite the number of children with deficient reading skills to be over fifteen percent or even as high as thirty percent of the total school population. At any rate, there are still large numbers of children who are failing to read to the maximum of their ability. This constitutes a serious educational problem. To alleviate this situation, the services of various reading personnel, such as...

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as consultants, remedial teachers, and clinicians, have been sought. However, many educators today are becoming concerned with the over-stressed aspect of remediation and the frequent ignorance of prevention. Dechant states:

Although we have done a better job of remediation than of prevention, it is naturally better to prevent than to remediate; it is far better that we deal with the problem in the classroom than wait until the pupil becomes a reading disability.\(^1\)

This statement, thus, subjects the conventional role of the elementary remedial reading teacher to closer scrutiny. The main task of this reading specialist is generally accepted as one of remedying reading disabilities with, however, scant attention being directed toward the initial prevention of these failures. There are often more children with reading difficulty than the remedial classes can accept. In addition, many school reading programs do not provide this special help until the children reach third grade or beyond, thus fully displaying their failure potential.\(^2\) Yet, ideally, prevention of these reading disabilities should begin with initial reading instruction, usually grade one, and continue as the child progresses through the grades.


As a result, many schools have created the position of the reading consultant, whose responsibility is to assist classroom teachers in providing more effective reading programs.\(^1\)

...a change is slowly being affected. Reading specialists are being sought—not to serve as remedial reading teachers and work in the bottomless pit, but as reading consultants. The role of the consultant is to prevent reading failure by working with teachers, school psychologists, guidance and counseling specialists, administrators, and parents. At least we are on the "ounce of prevention" phase.\(^2\)

The use of reading consultants then places a prime responsibility upon the classroom teacher for it is at this point that the prevention of reading disability commences. The classroom teacher must make each reading lesson diagnostic and recognize disability when it exists:

...it is only through accurate and continuous diagnosis of the child's needs and difficulties, of his assets and strengths, that the teacher can modify instruction to meet these needs. Diagnosis is a blueprint for instruction. Continuous diagnosis is a "must" in the reading classroom. Prevention is an end-product of diagnosis. Diagnosis identifies minor difficulties before they become disabilities...\(^3\)

Classroom teachers, then, need to develop their ability to answer the question of why a child cannot read. Perhaps


\(^2\)Stauffer, "Change, but—", p. 474.

\(^3\)Dechant, *Diagnosis and Remediation of Reading Disability*, p. 2.
a change in attitude toward poor readers is also neces-
sitated, along with a more sincere willingness to help
these children overcome their reading problems.

Of prime importance, then, is how elementary
reading programs can best meet the needs of those children
with reading difficulties. Several approaches are suggested
and currently being used. One of the most common today is
the special reading class conducted by a remedial reading
teacher. A more recent trend is the use of a reading con-
sultant to help the classroom teacher improve her reading
instruction and thus prevent reading difficulties from be-
coming serious disabilities. A combination-approach can
also be utilised in which the consultant will stress pre-
vention and a remedial teacher or clinician will help
those children having severe problems in reading. Thus
each reading program must decide on its prime emphasis:
remediation or prevention.

Definition of Terms
Reading personnel are acknowledged by a variety
of titles: reading specialist, special teacher of reading,
consultant, clinician, and reading supervisor. The fol-
lowing will serve to define the role played by each
reading person. These definitions were formulated by the
Professional Standards and Ethics Committee and approved
by the International Reading Association.¹

¹"Roles, Responsibilities, and Qualifications of
Reading Specialists," Journal of Reading, XII (October,
1968), pp. 60-61.
**Reading Specialist:** That person (1) who works directly or indirectly with those pupils who have either failed to benefit from regular classroom instruction in reading or those pupils who could benefit from advanced training in reading skills and/or (2) who works with teachers, administrators, and other professionals to improve and coordinate the total reading program of the school.

**Special Teacher of Reading:** has major responsibility for remedial and corrective and/or developmental reading instruction. This teacher is also called a "remedial reading teacher."

**Reading Consultant:** works directly with teachers, administrators, and other professionals within a school to develop and implement the reading program under the direction of a supervisor with special training in reading. This teacher is also termed a "reading resource teacher."

**Reading Clinician:** provides diagnosis, remediation, or the planning of remediation for the more complex and severe reading disability cases.

**Reading Supervisor:** provides leadership in all phases of the reading program in a school system. This person is also called a "coordinator or director."

This research was concerned with the remedial reading teacher and the reading consultant, with the understanding that the former's prime responsibility is to work with children and the latter works primarily with teachers.
Statement of Problem

The purpose of this paper was to explore the present role of the elementary reading teacher and to determine any recent changes or trends in the nature of that role. It attempted to determine whether there is a definite stress in reading programs on remediation or on prevention of reading programs.

Scope and Limitations

Cities throughout the United States with populations of 350,000 or more were included in this survey. The atlas revealed thirty-six cities of such size. Preliminary letters were sent to the Superintendents of these thirty-six public school systems requesting the names of the persons in charge of their reading programs. Questionnaires were then sent to those persons.
CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Heilman stated, "One of the virtues of American education is that its practitioners have never entirely satisfied with their practices or the result of their efforts." The changing role of the elementary reading teacher today is a reflection of this statement. Educators are becoming concerned with the prevention of difficulties in school, rather than simply applying a band-aid to our educational ills. Therefore, the role of the reading consultant is now being viewed hopefully as an important means of preventing reading difficulties.

The Reading Specialist Before 1961

This specialized attention to the prevention of reading difficulties, however, was slow to emerge and the product of a gradual evolution.

It was not until 1930 that a reading specialist responsible for improving the teaching of reading emerged and then in only a few large cities. Twenty years later special supervisors of reading were visible at state, county, district, and city levels, but in very small numbers. During the early 1950's many more people were hired as reading consultants, but in the main they did not have specialized training in reading and were primarily used as remedial reading teachers.

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Remedial reading teachers and programs were, then, more commonplace. In 1938, Dyer wrote that "provision for remedial instruction is an administrative function of any school in which children have not acquired reading habits effective for study and for gaining general information and pleasure." Yet thirty years ago it was not feasible for every school system to operate a remedial reading program and therefore Dolch presented a plausible solution which bore overtones of prevention:

"...have one teacher in each building make a special study of remedial reading and thus develop into somewhat of a specialist in that field... By following this interest, that teacher could, year by year, accumulate a special knowledge about reading and a special skill in handling reading cases that would make him an invaluable consultant for other teachers in the school."

The concept of remediation, however, continued to persevere. Fankaske stated, in an idealistic tone, that "remedial reading need not be introduced before the third grade because in most schools first and second grade children are already taught individually,...getting the sort of attention they would receive in the remedial class." Yet despite this stronghold of remediation, some apprehensions toward a strictly remedial program were developing. Whipple

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3Margaret Fankaske, "The Ideal Remedial Reading Program," Teachers College Journal, XII (January, 1941), p. 53.
Systems of remedial reading may per se defeat the purpose of reducing retardation since classroom teachers may then fail to provide for individual differences in their rooms. For this reason remedial measures need to be chosen with due consideration to the entire curriculum and the ultimate good of all the pupils.1

Consideration should then be focused on the status of some reading programs and teachers during this period before 1961. A questionnaire concerned with remedial reading programs was sent by the National Association for Remedial Teaching to its membership in the spring of 1951. Its findings were:

1. three-fourths of the schools represented in the study carried on remedial reading instruction.
2. nearly two-thirds of the schools had one or more full-time remedial reading teachers.
3. one-third of the public schools had teachers assigned to part-time remedial reading instruction.

It might be indicated, however, that until recently even the schools associated with the National Association for Remedial Teaching employed only a minimum of teachers who were especially trained for remedial work in reading and approximately sixty percent of these schools began their initial remedial program after 1940.2 In 1952, Bond and Botel visited ten eastern reading centers to evaluate their programs. Each center had, as one of its major goals, the diagnosis and correction of reading disability; but there existed a dearth of well-trained people in the field of

1Gertrude Whipple, "Remedial Program in Relation to Basic Programs of Reading," Elementary School Journal, LXIV (May, 1944), p. 525.
reading. In most centers the facilities were quite limited; only three of the ten centers had, the authors felt, an environment conducive for working with children. While some centers did not engage in comprehensive testing, all gathered extensive case-history data. The diagnostic procedures varied considerably among the ten reading centers with no one factor being routinely tested. The remedial instruction observed by Bond and Botel was basically textbook-workbook in nature with little effort to enrich the program. Remediation, seemingly, received a higher priority in these ten reading centers than did prevention of difficulties.

At this time, the definitions and duties of reading specialists were varied. However, it seems that previously most reading specialists "worked more closely with disabled readers directly than they did with teachers and the total reading program." Bogdan investigated the role of the reading consultant in 1955. She found that the consultant surveyed the reading abilities of all pupils in a school district and recommended textbooks and materials for various children and reading difficulties. She also often suggested books to be procured for school libraries. Thus according


to Bogdan's survey, teaching remedial reading classes did not seem to occupy much of the consultant's time.

In 1959 the International Reading Association presented minimum standards for reading specialists to deter unqualified persons from attempting those tasks which only a trained reading specialist should undertake. It should be noted that there were no special classifications for remedial teachers, consultants, clinicians, or supervisors, but merely the designation of "specialist." The reading specialist was defined as "that person who works directly or indirectly with those pupils who have failed to benefit from regular classroom instruction in reading, and/or who works with teachers and administrators to improve and coordinate the total reading program of the school." The following are the minimum standards for the professional training of reading specialists:

I. A minimum of three years of successful teaching and/or clinical experience.

II. A Master's Degree or its equivalent of a Bachelor's Degree plus 30 graduate hours in reading and related areas as indicated below:

A. A minimum of 12 semester hours in graduate-level reading courses with at least one course in 1 and 2, and 3 or 4:
   1. Foundations or survey of reading
   2. Diagnosis and correction of reading disabilities
   3. Clinical or laboratory practicum in reading
   4. Supervision and curriculum in reading

B. At least one graduate-level course in each of the following content areas:
   1. Measurement and/or evaluation

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2. Child and/or adolescent psychology or development
3. Personality and/or mental hygiene
4. Educational psychology

5. The remainder of semester hours in reading and/or related areas. Courses recommended might include one or more of the following:
   1. Literature for children and/or adolescents
   2. Organization and supervision of reading programs
   3. Research and the literature in reading
   4. Foundations of education
   5. Nature of language
   6. Principles of guidance
   7. Communications
   8. Speech and hearing
   9. Exceptional child
   10. Or any additional courses under II A and II B

Harris summarized and highlighted remedial reading throughout five decades, from 1916 to 1965. He characterizes the first period, from 1916-1925, as an unproductive one, with few papers on remedial reading printed. The second period, from 1926-1935, heralded the development and use of diagnostic reading tests. The period from 1935 to the beginning of World War II witnessed a continued output of new books to be used by reading and classroom teachers. The initial establishment of large-scale remedial reading programs in public school systems occurred during the mid- and late-1920's. The availability of hundreds of unemployed college graduates led to some "bold ventures." Under the guidance of Gates and his assistants, the Federal Writer's Project prepared a series of eighty practice booklets for use in remedial reading. Thus numerous people with no previous teaching experience completed a short training

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program and were then assigned to teach small groups of disabled readers in the public schools of New York City. This program survived until our entry in World War II necessitated its discontinuation. Harris divided the next decade into the period of 1946 to 1955. It was punctuated by an increasing interest in remedial reading. Many colleges and universities organized reading clinics and inaugurated graduate training programs for reading specialists. The number of remedial teachers in public school systems continued to grow, while remedial reading programs began to include the secondary school as well as elementary.

Finally during the period of 1956 to 1965, remedial reading began to be accepted as a field of special education which required specially trained teachers and deserved financial support. State certification of remedial reading teachers was also begun, although on a small scale. Many states were slow to require special certification for remedial reading personnel.¹

Robinson cited 1950 to 1960 as the developmental period for the position of the reading consultant. Thus more assistance was provided for the classroom teacher who was then able to discuss and resolve her problems with a reading specialist and the disabled reader who benefited from this special help to his teacher.²

¹Albert J. Harris, "Five Decades of Remedial Reading," (Bethesda, Maryland: Educational Resources Information Center, 1967), pp. 1-11.

Thus remedial reading achieved a place of prominence in education and special teachers were trained and employed to remediate these reading difficulties. In addition, reading consultants also began to supplement reading programs.

Present Role of the Elementary Reading Teacher

There lingers, even today, some divergence in the concepts of a remedial reading teacher and a reading consultant; at times, the terminology is used interchangeably. However a sharper clarification of these two roles is becoming more prominent; likewise, there is a growing focus on the prevention of reading difficulties. Betts cautioned that some school systems call all special reading teachers "remedial teachers," regardless of their levels of competence. In addition, he warns of the dangers of solely concentrating on aspects of remediation.

Some large school systems have appointed hundreds of "remedial" teachers as a first step toward upgrading reading instruction, and thereby have created a dangerous situation. Some too soon, thinking leaders will raise the question, "If we need so many people to remedy our reading ills, what is the cause?"

Austin and Morrison reported, on the basis of questionnaire returns from 795 school systems, that individual instruction for children with reading problems was infrequently offered by persons other than the classroom teacher. Only about one-third of the school systems indicated that special

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reading teachers were employed for this type of service.  
Oyster reported the findings of a survey on the roles of  
711 elementary school reading specialists in fifteen states.  
These specialists were divided into three distinct groups:  

1. 169 reading consultants who spend the majority 
of their time working with the staff in the im-
provement of the total reading program.  
2. 492 remedial teachers who spend the majority of 
their time teaching children with reading diffi-
culties.  
3. 50 persons with dual jobs; they divide their time 
between teaching remedial reading and handling 
another major academic specialty.  

However, there seemed to be a lack of clarity as to the 
constitution of their jobs. Oyster stated:  

The nomenclature seems hopelessly confused, with 
duties and responsibilities having little to do with 
titles. The most common title for those who worked 
with teachers was consultant, while remedial reading 
teacher was the most common title for those who 
teach children.

Remedial reading teachers say they teach reading 
to individuals and small groups. They also indicate 
that they hold conferences with parents and class-
room teachers to coordinate the program for the child. 
They "try" to do many of the things consultants do "if 
they can find the time," which means that they see the 
importance of doing them.  

Courtney also attempted to clarify these roles: "The rem-  

1Mary C. Austin and Coleman Morrison, The First E. 
The Harvard Report on Reading in Elementary Schools (New 
2Mary M. Oyster, "An Occupational Study of Reading 
Specialists in Elementary Schools," J. Allen Figurel (ed.), 
Vistas in Reading, Proceedings of the Eleventh Annual Con-
vention, Vol. 11, Part 1. (Newark, Delaware: International 
3Ibid., p. 455. 
The reading consultant is a relatively new specialist in the school program. The title and responsibilities have evolved largely from the expanded demands placed on the teacher of remedial reading. The successful remedial reading teacher is often asked to assist classroom teachers in preventing serious reading retardation. Soon this person is charged with the added responsibility of in-service training of teachers on a large scale. The curriculum in reading requires frequent study and revision. New teachers often have only a general acquaintance with teaching reading and must be assisted. Parents and other members of the community must be kept aware of the reading program and the basis on which it is designed. Research in reading is extensive and must constantly be related to current practice. The person charged with this responsibility is the reading consultant.

Morburg also warned that the consultant can encounter difficulties unless his role is clearly defined: "He is a staff member who serves the school as a resource person, adviser, in-service leader, investigator, diagnostician, special instructor, and evaluator." John and John further elaborate: "Working with classroom teachers to improve the teaching of reading is the primary function of

the reading consultant." Durrell, however, stated that slow learners in reading should consume much of the consultant's time:

Her position is that of assistant to the teachers, having full-time responsibility to assist them with slow learners in reading. Her work should not be cluttered with a multiplicity of committee duties, curriculum revision, PTA planning, textbook selection, bulletin writing. Her should it be that of endless examinations of children followed by report making. The job is in the classrooms, not in the office, except when needed classroom materials and plans are being prepared. Her full time should be devoted to helping teachers with specific instruction problems of children who are slow learners in reading. It would readily follow, then, that the elementary reading teacher needs to be thoroughly familiar with the reading skills to be taught at all levels. Furthermore, she must appreciate and understand the continuity of the total reading program. Durrell stated that the remedial reading teacher "should have special training and aptitude for the work. She must have the ability to get on well with other teachers, with parents, and with children. Successful classroom experience is indispensable."

Newton further added: "Since the duties of the reading specialist include making suggestions regarding skills in many sub-

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3Ibid., p. 341.
ject-matter areas, the position calls for a knowledge of material in many different fields at all grade levels.\(^1\)

The reading consultant must also be able to meet many demands and

...be knowledgeable as concerns all aspects of a good developmental reading program and its implications for a total district, specific school, teacher, or child. He must be thoroughly versed in books, various teaching aids and materials, tests and their uses, and published research and its implication for the classroom teacher. He must instigate research projects within the district to test the validity of new materials and approaches, evaluate needs of individual children by means of diagnostic procedures, and evolve ways of disseminating information to parent and community groups.\(^2\)

Courtney lists three qualifications which the successful reading consultant must possess. He must have expertise in human relations and the ability to communicate well with many types of people in order to stimulate support for the reading program. Secondly, he must be well trained.

Finally, the reading consultant should have outstanding organizational ability. Since the consultant must work with many others, he can jeopardize the total program with negligent planning or poor organization.\(^3\) Gohn and Gohn feel


\(^3\) Courtney, *The Role of the Reading Consultant*, p. 1.
the reading consultant should be a teacher of outstanding skill and competence in the area of reading. She should have demonstrated creativity and curiosity in the use of original and different approaches. Durrell listed the following special qualifications which the reading specialist should possess:

1. The applicant should have a sound philosophy of education and be thoroughly familiar with the total instructional program at the elementary level.

2. The applicant must possess those personal qualities which will gain the professional respect of members of the teaching staff as well as the general public.

3. The applicant should be a well-adjusted individual and should have demonstrated considerable ability in past teaching assignments.

4. The applicant should have the faculty of adjusting to situations caused by many and varied interruptions.

5. The applicant must, by her past training and experience, have demonstrated a thorough knowledge of the reading program, both developmental and remedial, at the elementary level.

Certainly, these qualifications are a matter of the utmost concern. Garner made the following supportive statement:

The fact that money, facilities, equipment, books, and instructional materials are available, even in copious quantities, does not guarantee that a genuine reading program will come into existence. The key critical need in all phases of public school reading programs is for qualified, not merely certified, reading specialists.

1John and Oohn, Teaching the Retarded Reader, p. 108.

2Durrell, Improving Reading Instruction, p. 342.

This concern over preparation and certification requirements for reading specialists began, according to Yarington, in approximately 1959 when the International Reading Association proposed a list of standards for its membership to consider. One year later, Robinson described a master's degree program for reading specialists at the University of Chicago. Also in 1960, a study by Haag, Sayles, and Smith indicated that twelve states had certification requirements for reading specialists. In 1963, Cook reported a "state of utter confusion" in the certification of reading specialists. He indicated that only seven states required a reading course for elementary teachers and only two states required a certificate for remedial reading teachers.

Yarington, in 1967, found that twenty-two states did report having special requirements for reading teachers; these ranged from six semester hours in reading to a master's degree in reading with specific courses. Of these twenty-two states, twenty seemed to meet the minimum standards of the International Reading Association. Kinder reported in 1968 that only twenty-five of the state agencies have certification requirements for reading specialists. Of these states, only eight have reading requirements which seem to meet IRA's minimum standards. In addition, five

states were in the process of developing changes in their reading certification program: Iowa, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.¹

Durrell stated that the reading specialist should have not less than five years of successful classroom teaching experience at the primary or intermediate level. He also regarded some form of experience in teacher leadership activity as desirable. Finally, he stated that work in a reading clinic or some comparable experience is necessary.² Courtney reported that the reading consultant "should have had successful teaching experience, two or more courses in developmental reading, two or more in remedial work preferably with some sort of practicum, and at least one course related to the roles of a reading consultant and the development of reading curricula."³ Cohn and Cohn reported that the reading consultant should have at least three years of classroom experience on various grade and age levels. They further stated that "in addition to the usual courses in developmental reading, and diagnosis and correction of reading difficulties, the consultant should have a background of a practicum in reading, and organization and supervision of reading improvement programs."⁴

²Durrell, Improving Reading Instruction, p. 342.
³Courtney, The Role of the Reading Consultant, p. 2.
⁴Cohn and Cohn, Teaching the Retarded Reader, p. 108.
Thus with these standards being advocated, the International Reading Association, in 1968, revised the minimum standards expected of reading specialists. The following qualifications have been established:

A. General (Applicable to all Reading Specialists)

1. Demonstrate proficiency in evaluating and implementing research.
2. Demonstrate a willingness to make a meaningful contribution to professional organizations related to reading.
3. Demonstrate a willingness to assume leadership in improving the reading program.

B. Special Teacher of Reading

1. Complete a minimum of three years of successful classroom teaching in which the teaching of reading is an important responsibility of the position.

2. Complete a planned program for the Master's Degree from an accredited institution, to include:
   1. A minimum of 12 semester hours in graduate level reading courses with at least one course in each of the following:
      a. Foundations or survey of reading
      b. Diagnosis and correction of reading disabilities
      c. Clinical or laboratory practicum in reading
   2. Complete, at undergraduate or graduate level, study in each of the following areas:
      a. Measurement and/or evaluation
      b. Child and/or adolescent psychology
      c. Psychology, including such aspects as personality, cognition, and learning behaviors
      d. Literature for children and/or adolescents
   3. Fulfill remaining portions of the program from related areas of study.

C. Reading Consultant

1. Meet the qualifications as stipulated for the Special Teacher of Reading.
2. Complete, in addition to the above, a sixth year of graduate work including:
   1. An advanced course in the remediation and diagnosis of reading and learning problems.
2. An advanced course in the developmental aspects of a reading program.

3. A course or courses in curriculum development and supervision.

4. A course and/or experience in public relations.

5. Field experiences under a qualified Reading Consultant or Supervisor in a school setting.¹

Using the guidelines established by the IRA, the preparation of reading specialists in various public schools will be briefly examined. Oyster conducted a study of 711 elementary reading specialists in fifteen states. She reported that the majority (76 percent) of the reading consultants had master's degrees, with 14 percent of these working on doctorate degrees. Bachelor's degrees were held by 23 percent but 14 percent of these were working toward master's degrees.² Oyster also reported on the experiential background of these reading specialists. It was found that 27 percent had six years or less classroom teaching experience prior to becoming a reading specialist, while 10 percent had no classroom experience prior to their work as remedial reading teachers.³ Furthermore, many of the specialists felt they were inadequate in the interpretation of test results, thus being handicapped in their ability to diagnose reading difficulties.⁴

¹Oles, Responsibilities, and Qualifications of Reading Specialists, Journal of Reading, XII (October, 1968), p. 64.


³Ibid., p. 456.

⁴Ibid., p. 456.
The responsibilities and services provided by these elementary reading specialists must also be considered. Dever, in a pioneer study on reading positions, reported that reading specialists and consultants spent the majority of their time in the following activities: teaching reading, supervision, testing, diagnosis, and counseling. A lesser amount of time was applied to administrative and clerical work, research, public relations, and community activities.\(^1\)

Newton reported that the duties of the reading specialist are five-fold:

1. Appraisal of reading materials, the testing program, the staff, and other school resources and services.
2. Reporting to classroom teachers of students in the reading program.
3. Research in the field of reading and reports of such to the staff.
5. Improvement of classroom instruction in reading.\(^2\)

In addition to the previously mentioned duties, Marks reported that the reading center teacher should:

1. Analyze pupil needs in reading.
2. Assist with the development of a sound public relations program regarding instruction in reading.
3. Identify learner needs by analyzing physical, mental, social, emotional, and educational data from all available records.
4. Determine the progress in reading for each pupil through the use of informal inventories, standardized tests, observations, and reports of progress in other areas of learning.
5. Maintain records of valuable information pertinent to the development of each learner.


\(^2\)Newton, Reading in Your School, p. 147.
6. Prepare and forward periodic reports to the parents of students in the reading center.1

Austin and Morrison, in summarizing the role of the remedial reading teacher, stated:

Aside from her role as special instructor to unsuccessful students, the remedial reading teacher is somewhat of a nonentity. This specialist's function ranks last in...the area of diagnostic testing, where her talents could be utilized.2

The International Reading Association in 1968 presented the minimum standards for reading specialists. The responsibilities for reading teachers and consultants are as follows:

A. Special Teacher of Reading
   • Should identify students needing diagnosis and/or remediation.
   • Should plan a program of remediation from data gathered through diagnosis.
   • Should implement such a program of remediation.
   • Should evaluate student progress in remediation.
   • Should interpret student needs and progress in remediation to the classroom teacher and parents.
   • Should plan and implement a developmental or advanced program as necessary.

B. Reading Consultant
   • Should survey and evaluate the ongoing program and make suggestions for needed changes.
   • Should translate the district philosophy of reading with the help of the principal of each school into a working program consistent with the needs of the students, the teachers, and the community.


2Austin and Morrison, The First R, p. 188.
Should work with classroom teachers and others in improving the developmental and corrective aspects of the reading program. ¹

How do the responsibilities and services provided by the consultant differ from that of the reading teacher? Robinson reported that "the reading consultant of today is not, and should not be, a teacher of developmental or remedial reading. His major role and purpose is to work with the staff of a school to develop, implement, coordinate, and evaluate the reading program."² Courtney warned: "It is often necessary to make clear to the teacher that the consultant is not a 'supervisor'...that his role is that of 'service'"³ Austin and Morrison found that reading consultants performed the following duties in terms of a percentage distribution.

Development of reading goals and objectives 36.1
Implementation of reading program 34.8
Appraisal of success/failure of program 24.7
Recruitment of reading personnel 12.2
Selection of reading material 23.6
Supervision of classroom teaching 13.2
Providing diagnostic testing in reading 48.3
Supervision of reading in all schools 37.2
Supervision of reading in individual schools 15.2
Interpretation of reading program ² 22.0

Thus the greatest portion of their time, according to

¹Roberts, Responsibilities, and Qualifications of Reading Specialists, p. 61.

²Robinson, "Reading Consultant of the Past, Present and Possible Future," p. 477.

³Courtney, Role of the Reading Consultant, p. 10.

⁴Austin and Morrison, The First R, p. 188.
this table, is devoted to diagnostic testing and remediation. Austin and Morrison conclude, therefore, "that in many school systems where reading consultants are employed they must assume more responsibility for the success of retarded readers than for teachers." Durrell listed some duties of reading consultants in New Britain, Connecticut. They seem to be diversified and of importance:

1. Assist elementary teachers in reading.
2. Advise on the prevention of reading difficulties in grade one.
3. Provide intensive analysis of children with severe reading difficulties.
4. Assist with class organization for remedial instruction.
5. Assist in the development of reading programs for gifted children and rapid learners in reading.
6. Provide demonstrations, discussions, and materials of instruction useful in the total reading program.
7. Help with research studies related to the reading program.
8. Assist with the development of plans for increased library services and with instructional aids related to the reading program.
9. Assist with the development of a sound public relations program regarding instruction in reading and interpret the reading program to the public and parents.2

Wylie reported on a study to discern various concepts of the role of the reading consultant. So that it could be determined how reading consultants and classroom teachers perceive the roles of the elementary reading consultant, one hundred classroom teachers and one hundred consultants were surveyed. There appeared to be strong differences between the concepts of the roles of the elementary

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1 Austin and Morrison, The First R. p. 186.
2 Durrell, Improving Reading Instruction. p. 337.
reading consultant:

1. Elementary classroom teachers view the role of the consultant as a supplier of material, demonstrator of techniques, and a director of informal diagnostic and corrective classroom procedures. The consultants were also concerned with materials; however, emphasis was placed upon administrative organization, time allotments, grouping, and school curriculum.

2. The implementation of aid by the consultant was viewed by the classroom teacher as a personalized, informal, small group activity. The consultant favored approaches that emphasized involvement with greater numbers.1

Thus, it would seem that for reading specialists to be effective, their roles must be well defined, generally understood, and agreed upon. Smith concluded that administrators should be better informed on the role of reading specialists and should provide them with more opportunities to evaluate reading programs, select reading materials, aid classroom teachers, and interpret the reading program to parents and the community.2

The duties and responsibilities of the reading specialist must then extend beyond the child if the remediation or prevention techniques are to be truly effective. However, Austin and Morrison stated: "It appeared...that few made any attempt to integrate the instruction a child received in the corrective program with that to be given


2Smith, "Responsibilities and Qualifications of Reading Specialists," p. 77.
him when he returned to his regular classroom.¹ This
might often be due to a lack of rapport and understanding
among classroom teachers, principles, and reading special-
ists. Durrell cited the importance of this instructional
integration:

Effective remedial teaching requires that the
classroom teacher and the remedial teacher share the
planning for children in remedial classes. Teachers
must not work at cross-purposes, with well-adjusted
material in the remedial class but extremely diffi-
cult material in the regular class. A cooperative
approach will enable the children to continue with
the same material in both rooms, with the skills
taught in the remedial class being put to use in
the regular class.²

Robinson also supported the need for interaction with
others:

The reading specialist in the school must be
responsible for requesting different types of special
services as they are needed. He must also be sure
that he is informed of the steps taken, the diffi-
culties corrected, and he must maintain proper
communication.³

An easily accessible and integral aid to the success of
the reading program is the school librarian. Whenever
possible, the reading specialist should work closely with
the librarian to:

1. advise her of books recommended for children’s
   personal reading in connection with specific units
   in the basic reader and in other content-area texts.

¹Austin and Morrison, *The First E*, p. 126.
²Durrell, *Improving Reading Instruction*, p. 343.
³Helen M. Robinson, "The Role of Auxiliary Services
   in the Reading Program," Lee W. Schell and Paul C. Burns
   (Eds.), *Remedial Reading: An Anthology of Sources* (Boston,
advise her of special needs of certain children so that she can recommend appropriate books to them.

2. solicit her cooperation in informing both the reading specialist and staff of new books which are appropriate for children's personal reading at different grade levels.

3. cooperate with her in setting up an "instructional materials center" including all types of materials, books, and audio-visual aids, and in keeping the staff well informed of materials available in this center.

4. cooperate with her in setting up story hours, puppet shows, and the like.¹

Strang felt that the reading specialist could also make a vital contribution in the area of guidance by improving reading instruction throughout the school and establishing a reciprocal relationship with guidance workers in the diagnosis and treatment of reading problems.²

In order to be successful, reading programs must breach many hurdles. One of the most serious is the misplaced stress on remediation rather than prevention. Heilman listed as a special problem the accurate recognition and referral of first stage remedial cases, thus emphasising prevention rather than cure. He added that reading failures become increasingly complicated and severe the longer they are left untreated.³ Bond, in a


³Heilman, Principles and Practices of Teaching Reading, p. 386.
study of fifty children who had been tutored at a university reading clinic, concluded that preventive measures would sharply reduce reading retardation. He suggested that the school administration, the classroom teacher, and the community social agencies work together to prevent reading problems. 1 Perhaps it will be necessary for school personnel to place more emphasis on each child realizing his reading potential and less emphasis on remediation that might be prevented. Putman reported four factors which are forcing the introduction of preventive aspects: the large number of adult illiterates, the increasing number of remedial cases, the rising cost of remedial programs, and the traumatic experiences of the disabled reader. 2 Austin and Morrison also reported:

Teachers and administrators...are much concerned about those children who are disabled readers. Too frequently, however, attention centers on the cure rather than the causes of the problem. Field study observations revealed that much of the teaching of reading is inferior and that many children fail to learn to read because of the instruction offered in the school. There will always be some children who need special help in reading; but if greater emphasis were placed upon improved teaching of the developmental aspects of the reading program, many a potential problem could be prevented. Therefore, it is recommended that greater emphasis than heretofore be placed on helping teachers use the most effective instructional material and techniques in


an effort to prevent children from becoming disabled readers.\textsuperscript{1} Oliver also reflected upon the philosophy of remediation. The remedial reading teacher often works with intermediate grade children who are disabled readers; simultaneously, in the primary classrooms, the conditions which permitted the development of reading difficulties continue to exist. Without special measures for prevention of reading difficulties in the primary grades, a substantial number of reading difficulties are almost certain to reappear... year after year.\textsuperscript{2} Veatch also presented some thought-provoking views:

The proper clientele of reading specialists, if we are to use their knowledge and skills wisely, is the classroom teacher, rather than, as is now too often the case, individual children. In fact, if specialists do feel the need to work with children away from their classroom setting, is it not a sign of their inability to help teachers? It is a major operation to teach teachers, but it must be done. There is no other way to meet the rising, engulfing tide of need.\textsuperscript{3}

Stauffer stated: "There are a number of shameful, cancerous circumstances that continue to afflict our schools." Of these, he found the number of qualified consultants too small. Another issue he deplored was that most graduate reading programs are geared toward remedial instruction.

\textsuperscript{1}Austin and Morrison, \textit{The First R}, p. 231.

\textsuperscript{2}Marvin E. Oliver, "Reading Instruction: Preventive? Remedial?," \textit{National Elementary Principal}, LXII (February, 1966), p. 31.

rather than developmental prevention.\(^1\) Black reported on some of the problems of reading consultants in large cities as a result of a questionnaire distributed to reading supervisors in the sixty-five largest school districts in the United States. He concluded:

"Insufficient time, implying a need for more consultants, is ranked number one by thirty-three respondents. Second on the list is teacher competency, often associated with a shortage of consultants. Other concerns include a lack of funds and facilities to make in-service activities meaningful; know-how in supervision; difficulty in arranging conferences with teachers during school hours; the unwillingness of some teachers to accept consultant service and apathy of some principals toward their service; inadequately trained teachers of reading; consultant assignments to areas too large for effective supervision; and the placement of pupils in reading classes to accommodate schedules or to relieve other teachers of "problem" pupils."\(^2\)

O'Leary and Murphy called attention to two more problems of remedial programs. The first is that only a very small percentage of children needing help can be serviced by the remedial reading teacher. The second problem is that the relatively small amount of time allotted to remedial reading groups tends to make most programs ineffective.\(^3\)

Austin and Morrison reported the results of a study from 795 school systems:

\(^{1}\)Russell G. Stauffer, "Change, but—\(\ldots\)" Reading Teacher, XX (March, 1967), p. 474.


\(^{3}\)Helen O'Leary and Robert F. Murphy, "Remedial Reading: Success or Failure?" Catholic School Journal, LXIX (January, 1969), p. 22.
The little criticism of the special reading programs which did emerge centered mainly around three points: 1. the competency of special reading personnel, 2. participation in the selection of personnel, and 3. the lack of cooperation among reading teachers, principals, and classroom teachers. Furthermore, the school staff often felt that the reading personnel were "spread too thinly." The reasons given for not hiring more reading personnel were often (1) lack of funds, (2) lack of trained personnel, and (3) lack of adequate space to "house" a special reading program. Battista and Holland also described some limitations of reading center programs. They stated that diagnostic reports may be couched in phraseology which the classroom teacher may be unable to interpret. Another limitation may arise if the reading teacher is unfamiliar with the types of reading material available to the classroom teacher or unaware of the practical problems involved in the use of the materials. They also stated that pupil attendance at the reading center for remedial help is often limited in its effect to a very small percentage of the pupils in the school district. Another limitation was that the instruction given to the pupil at the reading center may bear little relationship to his daily classroom work, thus making a transfer of skills difficult. Battista

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2Battista and Morrison, "
and Holland, though, regarded as the biggest problem the possibility that the classroom teacher may then be likely to regard the child with reading difficulties as no longer her problem. In addition, the classroom teacher does not acquire insight into the reading problems of students sent to the center, nor does she learn the methods which might reduce the incidence of such problems among her other classroom pupils.  

Future Trends

If in the future the prevention of reading difficulties is indeed stressed, the role of the reading consultant will assume greater significance. But, if the consultant is to help the staff improve both the reading ability of each student and the use he makes of his ability, several additions and changes need to be implemented both in the consultant's training and actual performance.

Robinson reported:

A consultant should have had a minimum of three years of successful classroom teaching experience; preferably at more than one grade level. The minimum preparation should include a master's degree with supervised practical experience as an intern consultant.

Course work in reading, possibly five or six courses, should include: conceptual and historical background, approaches to reading instruction, independent activities within the classroom, specific

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2 Robinson, "Reading Consultant of the Past, Present and Possible Future," p. 480.
instructional procedures and materials for developing
basic and higher skills, reading patterns and skills
within the various disciplines, curriculum and supervi-
sory problems in reading, diagnosis and treatment
of reading disabilities, review of reading research,
designing and directing research in reading, develop-
ing life-time readers, inter-relationships with other
language arts, evaluation of student progress, and
evaluation of the reading program.  

Austin and Morrison, however, in reporting the results of
questionnaire returns from 795 school systems found that
most of the suggestions for the improvement of existing
reading programs could be summed up by "more" and "better."

The improvements foreseen were seven-fold:

1. The addition of more material
2. Development of improved diagnostic procedures
3. Employment of classroom teachers well-trained in
   reading
4. Establishment of clinics for severely disabled
   readers
5. Earlier identification of reading problems
6. Earlier remedial instruction
7. Closer cooperation between reading and classroom
   teachers.

Oliver stated that reading consultants, highly trained
in the causation and prevention of beginning reading dif-
culties, could eliminate the hiring of an expensive staff
of many remedial reading teachers. The consultant would

...help primary teachers discover the key concepts
of beginning reading instruction... He helps first-
grade teachers to recognize difficulties confronting
frustrated beginning readers. He demonstrates how
these difficulties can be overcome... He helps diag-

1Robinson, "Reading Consultant of the Past, Present
and Possible Future," p. 480.

2Austin and Morrison, "Services for Children with
Reading Difficulties," p. 15.
nose reading difficulty of individual children and recommends corrective procedures. He serves as a resource person.1

Robinson offered the following opinion concerning the future role of the reading consultant: "...essentially he should be as concerned with the individual strengths and weaknesses of each teacher, just as the teacher is expected to be concerned with each of his students."2

Battista and Holland presented an idea which reading specialists in the future may well employ:

Following a survey of all pertinent data in the cumulative folders covering school achievement, psychological data, teacher's observations, and the medical record, pupils are referred for diagnosis at the reading center. After the student's reading disabilities have been identified, the coordinator of the center prepares a written summary of his findings, together with specific recommendations. The findings are then sent to the elementary principal, the classroom teacher, and the elementary guidance counselor. But the matter does not end there. The coordinator personally consults with the teacher of each student involved in order to cover the report in detail, to discuss the significance of the findings, and to demonstrate to the teacher procedures which will most likely produce results.3

Thus the coordinator can keep open the lines of communication with classroom teachers and the teachers' knowledge of the reading process will be increased, perhaps enabling them to prevent some future reading difficulties. Kilanski

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1 Oliver, "Reading Instruction: Preventive? Remedial?" p. 32.

2 Robinson, "Reading Consultant of the Past, Present and Possible Future," p. 481.

urged that reading centers be combined with guidance centers. She reported:

There would be numerous opportunities for both formal and informal consultation concerning progress or regression, apparent success or failure. There would be greater continuity of programs, diagnosis, therapy, and follow-up procedures. The reading-guidance center would be a focal point for all interested personnel who are working with a child.¹

Perhaps, then, in the future reading consultants and remedial reading teachers will need to yield to the priority of preventing reading difficulties, rather than being content with short-term "cures."

Summary

Prior to 1960 most elementary reading teachers were engaged in remedial programs; however, concern was becoming evident over the apparent neglect of preventive measures. Therefore, the role of the reading consultant began to develop toward the end of this period. Another concern was the dearth of well-trained, certified reading specialists. Today reading specialists are more frequently serving classroom teachers in a consultant capacity in an effort to prevent reading difficulties and improve overall reading instruction in classrooms. The remedial reading teacher still performs an important function in trying to help disabled readers attain their potential. However, if this stress on prevention is effective, perhaps in the future the remedial reading teacher's duties will be revised, or hopefully someday eliminated.

CHAPTER III

THE PROCEDURE

This study was undertaken to ascertain the present role of the elementary reading teacher in the public schools. It attempted to delineate the duties and responsibilities of the reading consultant and the remedial reading teacher and to discover if there was more emphasis being placed on the preventive services of the former or the remediation of the latter.

Preliminary Survey

For this survey, cities with populations of 350,000 were chosen because they would be more apt to have special reading programs. Also, cities would be surveyed throughout the United States yielding a good cross-section of practices and procedures. The initial population sampling was, therefore, thirty-six cities with populations of 350,000 or more located in twenty-six states. A preliminary letter was sent to the Superintendent of Public Schools in each of these thirty-six cities. The name of the person or persons in charge of the reading program for the elementary schools in each Superintendent's city was requested. Replies were received from twenty-four cities, yielding the names of forty-eight personnel.
Preparation of the Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of seven questions of a multiple-choice nature and one requiring a brief written answer. Two questions were concerned with the type of reading personnel employed and how they were distributed within the school district. One question dealt with the qualifications required of reading personnel, while two more questions turned attention to the duties and responsibilities of various reading personnel. In addition, two questions attempted to discover the stress of the reading programs. Finally, the last question, of an essay nature, involved changes or innovations which the respondent would like to see made in regard to the special reading personnel's duties.

Collection of Data

This questionnaire, accompanied by a cover letter, was then mailed to each of the forty-eight names yielded by the preliminary letter. The questionnaires were coded so that follow-up letters could be sent. Thirty questionnaires were returned from these original forty-eight. A follow-up letter and duplicate questionnaire was then sent which resulted in the return of four more questionnaires for a total of thirty-four responses. In some cases there was more than one questionnaire returned from a single city. In these instances one questionnaire was selected per city. The following criterion was used in the selection process: first,
the questionnaire returned by the director of the reading program or second, the questionnaire most fully completed. These returned questionnaires represented twenty-one cities in seventeen states.

**Tabulation and Summary of Data**

The responses to the multiple-choice questions were tallied and compiled into tables indicating a frequency distribution. The results of the essay question, on changes or innovations in the reading program, were synthesized into groups and tabulated.
CHAPTER IV

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

This study explored the present role of the elementary reading teacher, including both the remedial reading teacher and the reading consultant, in public school systems. It attempted to discern if major stress was being given to the remediation of reading difficulties, the prevention of these difficulties, or a combination of both approaches. The information presented in the following tables was the result of responses from selected questionnaires from twenty-one cities, with populations of 350,000 or more in seventeen states.

The first two questions were concerned with the type of reading personnel employed by these school systems and how the services of these personnel were allocated. These two questions were as follows:

1. Does your school system employ
   ____ remedial reading teachers?
   ____ reading consultants (resource teachers)?
   ____ other, please explain ______________________

2. Do you have a special reading teacher
   ____ in each building?
   ____ for a certain number of schools?
   If so, what number? __________
   How much time spent in each school? ________

42
The responses indicated that eight school systems exclusively employed remedial reading teachers, but only three school systems solely employed reading consultants. Most frequently school systems combined the employment of both remedial reading teachers and reading consultants; however, this approach is not as high as those school systems which simply employed remedial reading teachers. Only one school system indicated that no special reading personnel were employed; instead the services of a language arts coordinator were utilized. Table 1, which presents this information, is concerned only with the employment of remedial reading teachers and reading consultants.

**TABLE 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of Reading Personnel Employed</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remedial reading teachers only</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading consultants only</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both of above</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>43%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None of above</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td><strong>100%</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It would seem from the information presented that few school systems are placing sole stress on helping classroom teachers to prevent reading difficulties. Most seem
to be helping remedial readers or combining the two approaches.

The following table concerns the allocation of reading service.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City Number</th>
<th>In each building</th>
<th>For a certain number of schools</th>
<th>Be reading teachers</th>
<th>Other</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>x 5-6 schools each, time varies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>x 2-4 schools each, time varies</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>x for 12 schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>x building choice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>x for 115 schools, 2 days each week</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>x 2-4 schools each, 2-3 days each</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>x for 2-4 schools, full/part time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td></td>
<td>x 20 Title I schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>x for 22 schools, 16 full day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>x for 39 schools, 37 full day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>x for 34 schools, full day</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>x 2 schools each, 4 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td></td>
<td>x 24 Miller- Sarah schools</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>x for 4 schools, 2 days each</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>x for 50 schools, 4 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>x 3 schools each, 16 days each</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td></td>
<td>x 10 schools/ low reading scores</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>x for 40 schools, half time</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Totals: 1 15 2 3
This table indicated that most school systems seem to have special reading personnel either divide their time among several schools or work full-time at some schools, leaving other schools in the system bereft of special reading personnel. Two school systems indicated no special reading teachers. Of these, one system does not employ any reading personnel while the other system uses only the services of reading consultants whose duties do not include the teaching of disabled readers either in small groups or individually. However, it must be noted that two other cities had indicated that only reading consultants were employed (Table 1); among their duties, these consultants do teach disabled readers. Only one school system indicated that a special reading teacher was provided for each school building. No explanation was offered to explain "Miller-Unruh schools."

The third question concerned the major recipient of the special reading personnel's help and knowledge.

The question asked:

3. In your reading program, to whom does the special reading teacher give primary stress?

- classroom teachers
- children with reading difficulties
- combination of above

Thirteen responses indicated that primary stress was given to children with reading difficulties, while only three school systems seemed to stress aid to classroom teachers. Five systems indicated a combination of aid both to classe-
room teachers and to disabled readers. This information has been presented in the following table.

**TABLE 3**

**STRESS OF SPECIAL READING TEACHER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress given to</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Classroom teachers only</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children with reading disability only</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Both of above</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It would seem that working with classroom teachers is an attempt to prevent reading difficulties, while working with children directly is a concentration on remediation. Therefore, the data shown in Table 3 indicate that remediation of reading difficulties is being stressed more than their prevention, but not exclusively.

The changing qualifications for reading personnel were considered in the fourth question.

4. What qualifications are required for special reading teachers in addition to a regular certificate?
   - **IRA requirements**
     - courses in reading
     - How many graduate credits? _____
     - Which courses? _______
   - Master's Degree in Reading
   - no requirements
   - other, please explain _______
The data for question four has been shown in the table below.

**TABLE 4**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>City Number</th>
<th>IR</th>
<th>SR</th>
<th>G</th>
<th>MD</th>
<th>M</th>
<th>O</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x 12 credits</td>
<td>x exam</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x diagnosis, remediation</td>
<td>x interest and desire</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x success in teaching</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x 12 credits</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td>x remedial reading</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td>x equivalent of Master's</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>18</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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<td>19</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>x</td>
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<tr>
<td>21</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>x 12 credits</td>
<td>x</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Totals</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
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</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IR</th>
<th>IRA requirements</th>
<th>MD</th>
<th>Master's Degree</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>SR</td>
<td>State requirements</td>
<td>None</td>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G</td>
<td>Courses</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Ten school systems insisted that reading personnel adhere to state requirements, however not all states do impose such standards. Eight school systems required courses in reading, while four set a Master's Degree as a requirement. It should be noted that some school systems listed both a Master's Degree and courses in reading; this, presumably, is because the Master's Degree does not have to be specifically in reading. Two school systems stated that they used IRA requirements as guidelines. On the other hand, six school systems, which are more than one-fourth of the total respondents, listed no requirements for reading personnel. In addition to these previously mentioned requirements, such factors as interest, desire, successful prior teaching in primary grades, and a qualifying exam were mentioned.

The next two questions attempted to establish the primary duties of reading personnel, both consultants and remedial teachers. If a school system employed both consultants and remedial teachers, both questions five and six were answered. If only consultants were employed, question five alone was answered. If only remedial teachers were employed, then only question six was answered. The first of these two questions asked the following information.

5. If your school system employs reading consultants, what are their duties? (Mark those duties which are considered of greatest importance with an XX.)
   ______ Supply reading material to classroom teachers
Select and evaluate reading material and tests

Keep staff informed of new developments and research in reading

Conduct in-service programs in reading

Arrange informal sessions to work with teachers on instructional problems in reading

Help classroom teachers carry on research (action or formal) in reading

Diagnose and test retarded readers

Help teachers learn to diagnose more effectively

Interpret results of diagnosis to staff and parents

Conduct demonstration classes in reading

Teach individuals or small groups of retarded readers

Parent conferences

Consulting with teachers on pupils' progress

In tallying the results, those duties marked with one "X" were counted singly, but those marked "XX" were counted double to indicate their prime importance. These duties were then assigned a rank order regarding their importance. According to the questionnaire responses, the prime duty of reading consultants was to conduct in-service programs in reading. Next in importance was to arrange informal sessions to work with teachers on instructional problems in reading. The preventive nature of both these duties is readily apparent. The duties of reading consultants
considered to be of lesser importance were to help classroom teachers carry on research, to conduct parent conferences, and to teach disabled readers. This information was tallied and presented in Table 5.

### TABLE 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duties</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Rank Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supply materials</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select and evaluate materials</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep staff informed</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-service programs</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal sessions</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help teachers with research</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnose and test disabled readers</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn to diagnose</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpret results of diagnosis</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration classes in reading</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach retarded readers</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent conferences</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult with teachers</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The format of question 6 is identical to that of question 5, except that it was concerned with remedial reading teachers rather than with reading consultants. Therefore, the list of duties is not repeated here again, in tallying the results, those duties marked with one "X"
were counted singly, but those marked "XX" were counted double to show their prime importance. Rank order was then assigned. As might be expected, the duty considered most important for remedial reading teachers was to teach individuals or small groups of retarded readers. Next in importance was to consult with teachers about remedial pupils' progress. To diagnose and test disabled readers ranked third in importance. This information from the sixth question has been tallied and presented in the following table.

**TABLE 6**

**DUTIES OF THE REMEDIAL READING TEACHER**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Duties</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Rank Order</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Supply materials</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Select and evaluate materials</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Keep staff informed</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-service programs</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Informal programs</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help teachers with research</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnose and test disabled readers</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learn to diagnose</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpret results of diagnosis</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Demonstration classes in reading</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teach retarded readers</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Parent conferences</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consult with teachers</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
It would seem that these are duties which are usually thought of as in the realm of the remedial reading teacher. The three duties considered to be of least importance were to help classroom teachers carry on research in reading, to keep the staff informed of new developments and research in reading, and lastly to conduct in-service programs in reading. The results of the responses on these two questions indicate that there are definite, distinct duties considered important for remedial reading teachers and other duties considered distinctive of reading consultants. On the whole, it would seem that reading consultants interact frequently with classroom teachers in an attempt to improve reading instruction and prevent reading difficulties. Conversely, remedial reading teachers devote the bulk of their time to children with reading difficulties, as well as to the diagnosis and remediation of these problems. Research in the classroom seems to be largely ignored. Helping classroom teachers carry on either action or formal research in reading received the least emphasis by both reading consultants and remedial reading teachers. This duty might be expected less of remedial reading teachers whose primary contact is with children. However, one might expect this aspect to receive more attention from reading consultants who interact more directly with classroom teachers.

The seventh question required an evaluation on
the stress of the school system's reading program. It
asked:

7. Which do you feel your school system's reading
program stresses most highly?

- remediation of reading disabilities
- prevention of reading disabilities

Perusal of Table 7 reveals an almost equal division in
the stress of the reading program, as shown below.

**TABLE 7**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stress</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Remediation of reading disabilities</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prevention of reading disabilities</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Totals</strong></td>
<td><strong>21</strong></td>
<td><strong>100</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Eleven school systems indicated a stress on the remediation
of reading difficulties, while ten school systems indicated
that the prevention of reading difficulties was most highly
emphasized. Many respondents stated, however, that though
their emphasis was now on remediation they were working
toward stress on prevention. The results of Table 7
seem to indicate a possible discrepancy with Tables 1 and
3 which concluded that remedial reading teachers were
employed most frequently and that the major stress of pre-
sent reading programs was in helping children with reading
difficulties rather than in assisting classroom teachers.
These two conclusions seem to align themselves more with
the idea of remediation rather than prevention; yet al-
most half of the respondents indicated their reading pro-
gram stressed prevention most highly. Perhaps this dis-
crepancy arises from either the interpretation of the
word "prevention" or an aura of idealism at the time of
the response. However, the important result is that many
school systems do seem to be aware, today, of the impor-
tance of preventing reading difficulties by up-grading
present reading instruction.

The final question, of an essay nature, stated:

5. Briefly enumerate any changes or innovations you
would like to see made in regard to the special
reading teacher's duties.

These responses were then synthesized into groups when
possible. The results are as follows:

TABLE 8

CHANGES OR INNOVATIONS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Suggestions</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>More stress on prevention by interaction with</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>classroom teachers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better qualified reading teachers</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More reading teachers</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reading workshops for classroom teachers</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work predominantly with primary children</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use para-professionals in reading</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Help children meet initial success in reading</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Earlier identification of probable reading</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>disability</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Better screening and diagnosis of reading disabilities</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
All respondents did not complete this request; on the other hand, some listed several suggestions. The change most frequently mentioned was more stress on prevention of reading difficulties by working more closely with classroom teachers. Also wanted were more and better qualified reading teachers which would indicate that a better quality reading program is yet to be had. Finally there were many changes recommended once each. Four of these suggestions seem to imply a desire for better quality reading instruction and the possible prevention of reading difficulties. They were: (1) more reading workshops for classroom teachers, (2) reading personnel to work more predominantly with primary grade children, (3) to help children meet success in reading initially in the first grade, and (4) earlier identification of probable reading disability.

**Summary**

A questionnaire was used to explore the present role of the elementary reading teacher in public school systems. It tried to discern if major stress was being given to the remediation of reading difficulties, the prevention of these difficulties, or a combination of both approaches. Information was gathered from selected questionnaires completed by reading personnel from twenty-one cities in seventeen states. It was found that most frequently school systems combined the employment of both
remedial reading teachers and reading consultants. The employment of remedial reading teachers alone was the practice with the next highest frequency. In addition, most school systems seemed to utilize reading personnel either part-time at several schools or full-time at selected schools, leaving some schools without special reading personnel. Various qualifications were required of reading personnel. Many school systems posed state requirements. However there were also several systems which listed no special requirements necessary for employment.

The majority of reading personnel indicated that they centered their concerns on children with reading disabilities, rather than on classroom teachers. The prime duty of reading consultants was to conduct in-service programs in reading, while the duty considered most important for remedial reading teachers was to teach individuals or small groups of retarded readers. The reading programs of the twenty-one school systems seemed to stress almost equally the remediation of reading disabilities and their prevention. Lastly, some suggestions were made to change or innovate the special reading teacher's duties. Most frequently mentioned was more stress on the prevention of reading difficulties by working more closely with classroom teachers.
CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The Procedure

This study was undertaken to ascertain the present role of the elementary reading teacher, including both the remedial reading teacher and the reading consultant, in the public schools. It attempted to delineate the duties and responsibilities of the reading consultant and the remedial reading teacher and to discern if major emphasis was being given to the preventive services of the former, to the remediation of the latter, or a combination of both approaches. Related literature was reviewed concerning the reading specialist before 1961, the present role of the elementary reading teacher, and possible future trends of this role. A preliminary letter was then sent to the Superintendent of Public Schools in thirty-six cities with populations of 350,000 or more.

The request for the name of the person or persons in charge of the reading program for the elementary schools yielded the names of forty-eight personnel from twenty-four cities. The questionnaire, consisting of seven questions of a multiple-choice nature and one requiring a brief written answer, was then mailed to each of the previously men-
tioned forty-eight persons. Thirty-four responses were received. Questionnaires were selected so that only one represented each of the twenty-one cities. The responses to the questionnaire were then tabulated and discussed.

Findings of the Study

Research into related literature revealed that prior to 1960 most elementary reading teachers were employed in a remedial capacity. Increasing concern at the end of this period over the apparent neglect of preventive measures, however, gave rise to the development of the reading consultant. There also seemed to be a lack of well-trained, certified reading specialists. At present, there seems to be more emphasis upon the use of reading specialists as consultants to classroom teachers. Thus, an effort is made to prevent reading difficulties through the improvement of overall reading instruction.

The questionnaire used in this study yielded supportive information. It was found that school systems usually combined the employment of both remedial reading teachers and reading consultants or else remedial reading teachers were employed exclusively. Reading personnel either divided their time between several schools or worked full-time at a few selected schools. It was also found that meeting state requirements was a frequent criterion for reading personnel; but no special requirements were set by many school systems. The majority of reading
personnel indicated that they stressed helping children with reading difficulties more highly than interaction with classroom teachers. Yet at the same time, the responses seemed to indicate that the reading programs of the selected school systems stressed almost equally the remediation of reading disabilities and their prevention. Reading consultants gave the highest priority to conducting in-service programs in reading; whereas remedial reading teachers stressed teaching individuals or small groups of disabled readers. Finally, suggestions were made which would innovate or change the special reading teacher's duties. It was found that the greatest need seemed to be more stress on the prevention of reading difficulties by closer interaction with classroom teachers.

Conclusions and Implications

Conclusions were formulated for each of the seven questions which composed the questionnaire. They are as follows.

1. What type of reading personnel is most frequently employed by public school systems?
   School systems employ both consultants and remedial reading teachers more frequently than either are employed exclusively.

2. How are reading personnel allocated within the school system?
Reading personnel most frequently either divide their time between several schools or work full-time at only selected schools.

3. Does the special reading teacher give primary stress to classroom teachers or to children with reading difficulties?
   Working with children with reading disabilities is more highly stressed than is interaction with classroom teachers.

4. Have school systems increased their qualifications for special reading teachers?
   There does not seem to be strong evidence to support this supposition.

5. What are the main duties and responsibilities of reading consultants?
   Reading consultants perceived the following three duties as being most important: (a) conduct in-service programs in reading, (b) arrange informal sessions to work with teachers on instructional problems in reading, and (c) select and evaluate reading materials and tests.

6. What are the main duties and responsibilities of remedial reading teachers?
   Remedial reading teachers perceived the following three duties as being most important: (a) teach
disabled readers individually or in small groups,
(b) consult with teachers on pupils' progress, and
(c) diagnose and test disabled readers.

7. Do reading programs in public school systems
stress prevention or remediation most highly?
There seems to be an almost equal division of
stress on remediation and prevention in the selected
public schools.

8. What are reading teachers most concerned about in
regard to their present duties?
More stress on the prevention of reading difficul-
ties by closer interaction with classroom teachers
is a change often mentioned.

These conclusions seem to imply an increasing awareness
of the importance of preventing reading difficulties rather
than simply remediating them. Some steps have been taken,
but there is a long road yet ahead. Consultants do seem
to be concerned predominantly with the aspect of preven-
tion, while remedial reading teachers do seem to function
within the area of remediation. Finally, the qualifications
for reading personnel by many school systems fall far below
the proposed requirements of the International Reading
Association. It seems that better qualified reading per-
sonnel must be required.

Suggestions for Further Study

1. This study could be broadened in scope to include
smaller cities.
2. A study could be done to determine precisely how selected school systems plan to prevent reading difficulties.

3. A study could be made to determine if individual classroom teachers in a school system show a preference toward either the services of remedial reading teachers or reading consultants.
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Appendix A
Letter to Superintendent
March 12, 1970

Superintendent of Schools
Public Schools

Dear Sir:

Under the sponsorship of Cardinal Stritch College, I am conducting an inquiry into the role of the elementary reading teacher in selected public school systems in the United States. This study is being conducted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master's Degree.

With your permission for this study, I would like to contact the person or persons in charge of the reading program for the elementary schools in your city. Please list, on the enclosed form, the names, positions, and mailing addresses of the aforementioned person or persons. May I please have this information by March 25?

Enclosed is a stamped, self-addressed envelope for your reply. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

(Miss Sharon Orzechowski)
2602 South Third Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53207
Appendix B

Form for Listing of Names of
Reading Personnel
Please list the names of the person or persons in charge of the reading program in the elementary schools in your city.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Address</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix C

Questionnaire and Cover Letter
April 8, 1970

Dear

Fifteen minutes (or less) of your time will help to complete this study of the role played by the elementary reading teacher. All of the following questions can be answered by checking the appropriate answers or by brief notations in several instances.

The individual responses will not be identified in a report and all returns will be handled confidentially. If you would like a summary of the findings of this survey, indicate so at the bottom of the questionnaire. You will receive this report at the beginning of September.

This survey is being conducted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master's Degree in Reading at Cardinal Stritch College. I would appreciate your answering, as completely as possible, this questionnaire and returning it to me in the enclosed self-addressed envelope by April 23. Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

(Miss Sharon Orzechowski)
2602 South Third Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin 53207
QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Does your school system employ ______ remedial reading teachers?
   ______ reading consultants (reading resource teachers)?
   ______ other, please explain ____________________________

2. Do you have a special reading teacher: ______ in each building?
   ______ for a certain number of schools?
     If so, what number? ______
     How much time spent in each school? _____
   ______ no special reading teachers
   ______ other, please explain ____________________________

3. In your reading program, to whom does the special reading teacher give primary stress?
   ______ classroom teachers
   ______ children with reading difficulties
   ______ combination of above, please explain ______

4. What qualifications are required for special reading teachers in addition to a regular teacher certificate?
   ______ IRA requirements
   ______ state requirements
   ______ courses in reading
     How many graduate credits? ______
     Which courses? ____________________________
   ______ Master's Degree in Reading
   ______ no requirements
   ______ other, please explain ____________________________

5. If your school system employs reading consultants, what are their duties? (Mark those duties which are considered of greatest importance with an XX.)
   ______ supply reading materials to classroom teachers
   ______ solicit and evaluate reading material and tests
Appendix D
Follow-up Letter
May 5, 1970

Dear

On approximately April 10, I sent you a questionnaire regarding the role of the elementary reading teacher in your school system. This study is being conducted as partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master's Degree in Reading.

As of this date I have not yet received this completed questionnaire. I am enclosing a duplicate form and request that you fill it out as completely as possible. It may be returned in the enclosed self-addressed envelope by May 17. Thank you for your cooperation.

Sincerely,

(Miss Sharon Orzechowski)
2502 South Third Street
Milwaukee, Wisconsin
53207
Appendix E

Initial Population Sampling
## Initial Population Sampling

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>City</th>
<th>State</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.</td>
<td>Atlanta, Georgia</td>
<td>Georgia</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.</td>
<td>Baltimore, Maryland</td>
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</tr>
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<td>3.</td>
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<td>7.</td>
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Appendix F
List of Cities Used and
Their Coded Numbers
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