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AUTHOR Corder, Reginald
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ABSTRACT

Purposes and activities of the Targeted Research and Development Project No. 3 are described. The project seeks to identify and describe the national reading problem, methods of reading instruction, and the training of reading teachers. The project, a literature search, is designed to identify literature related to reading instruction, to develop a reliable and valid method for evaluating that literature, and to apply the method to the comprehensive body of identified research. Steps in the project include (1) a search of the literature in the ERIC system, Education Index, Psychological Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, Dissertation Abstracts, government publications, and a number of other sources, expected to identify approximately 1,200 reports; (2) a review of the documents by a preliminary selection committee; (3) a critical review by a second committee of qualified and trained readers; and (4) a cross validation of the literature to provide analytical summaries of aspects of reading for use by various audiences. Forms used in identifying and analyzing documents are included. (MS)

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A Critical Review of the Information
Base for Current Assumptions Regarding
the Status of Instruction and Achievement
in Reading in the United States*

Reginald Corder
Advisory Services Department
Educational Testing Service
Berkeley, California

This somewhat formidable title embraces the work being done in the Targeted Research and Development Project No. 3. Project 3 is a literature search. It begins, as do Projects 1 and 2, with the basic assumption that there exists a significant, quantifiable deficit between the present status of reading achievement in the U.S. and the individual and social literacy needs of the populace.

Project 3 focuses on three sub-areas of the literature about reading and addresses itself to three principal tasks:

1. The determination of the extent and distribution of the national reading problem.
2. The determination of the use frequency and use distribution of the instructional methods, approaches, materials and equipment for reading instruction.
3. The description of the nature and extent of current practice in the training of those who teach children to read.

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In addressing the several questions of this project, a central effort has been not only to discover the research and survey literature which bear upon the questions, but to develop and utilize a comprehensive, reliable and validated method for evaluating the quality of the literature. We have thus been involved in the design of a systematic procedure by which an analysis of the variety of surveys, test data and scientific literature can be constructed to determine whether adequate documentation of the present status of reading achievement, use of methods and materials, and the nature of teacher training is possible.

In analyzing the total requirements of Project 3, we have separated the responsibilities and assigned them to several inter-related units: a project direction group; a bibliography development group which we have called the Logic Committee; a group of readers; and a report writing group which we have called the Technical review Committee.

Project direction has, in addition to the obvious administrative responsibilities, the responsibility for developing comprehensive preliminary lists of the literature which relates to the three tasks of the study. The search list of documents is varied and extensive. Considerable effort has been made to be as comprehensive as possible and to utilize a rather broad definition of literature in an attempt to find the full range of appropriate documents.

The preliminary search has involved a computer sweep through

all the ERIC documents, a hand search of the last ten years of the Education Index, Psychological Abstracts, Sociological Abstracts, Dissertation Abstracts, and of the publications of government agencies, state departments of education, selected educational research institutes and individuals, foundations, publishers of both reading materials and tests, teacher training institutions, and selected local school districts.

The final selection of bibliographic materials for review involves a two-step process. First, all references developed through the preliminary selection procedure are submitted to an advisory group called the Logic Committee, persons with acknowledged expertness in the fields of reading instruction, linguistics, and manpower resources. Members of this committee evaluate the preliminary set of references according to what they believe about the quality of the data so far as representativeness is concerned and the probable relevance of the references to one or more of the specific research tasks. These evaluations are then combined and a consensus as to inclusion is reached.

Secondly, the references on which there is agreement are sorted out according to the particular sub-task to which they are relevant. A review and analysis of these references is then made through a series of matrices which provide explicit definitions of the parameters of the three tasks (the reading problem, methods of instruction, and the training of teachers of reading). A primary purpose in selecting the final body of literature to be reviewed is

to attempt to fill out the full matrix of population characteristics and environments for each task as these are described in the various surveys, documents and professional literature. Thus, although prolific documents or surveys might be available on selected population characteristics and selected learner environments, the primary purpose of choosing literature to fill out a complete matrix will take precedence over the review of all documents available on any one cell of a matrix. If it becomes apparent that the preliminary search has not revealed any references for certain cells, the Logic Committee is asked to help find references to fill these gaps.

The general policy for accepting a document for review is that no reference is included in the bibliography without having been evaluated and ranked by all members of the Logic Committee, although, clearly, some references are included on which there is not total agreement as to worth or relevance. In following these procedures we hope to obtain a relatively unbiased body of documents to form the data base for the project.

Actual critical review of all documents selected by the Logic Committee is performed by a Committee of Readers. These are doctoral candidates in reading, educational psychology, and sociology from the University of California, Berkeley. In their review the readers use a single review format which permits them to make judgements concerning the adequacy of the data reported, and (as it may be appropriate) the degree to which the reported characteristics, conceptualizations, methodology or status may be determined from

the evidence presented in the literature. The review format itself was developed by members of the ETS research staff in the Western Office who will be responsible for writing the final state-of-the-art reports. This group, which we have called the Technical Review Committee, has also been responsible for training the readers in the use of the review format. Information included in the format is both objective and subjective, as in addition to reviewing a document for specific population or environmental characteristics which are relatively easy to define, readers are asked to make judgements concerning data quality and representativeness according to the Gephart model. Reviews also include relevant data tables and an abstract.

Initially, members of both the Technical Review Committee and the Logic Committee expressed concern about the writing of state-of-the-art papers based upon reviews prepared by graduate student readers. After a period of training and trial review of a number of documents by the readers, members of both committees became satisfied with the work of these reviewers, however. Every fourth document approved by the Logic Committee is reviewed independently by two readers as a reliability check. Members of the project direction group and Technical Review Committee also review some documents independently, as an additional check on quality control.

The final aspect of the rationale for review is a procedure by which cross-validation or verification of the data acquired from

the literature search may be made. Following the complete review of the documents finally selected, pilot investigations will be utilized to ascertain the accuracy of selected written reports dealing with the three tasks of this project. A number of field studies of two days each will be made as additional validations of the credibility of any large-scale reports which seem to represent significant trends or conclusions from the literature reviewed.

In summary, we expect that the work done in Project 3 will:

1. Identify approximately 1200 surveys, reports or studies which deal with the three sub-tasks of the project and are judged to be significantly important by an independent group of acknowledged experts in the fields of reading, linguistics, and manpower resources.
2. Establish a reviewing format with explicit criteria for rating and analyzing research reports and other literature in the field of reading and demonstrate the training of readers in the reliable use of this format.
3. Provide critical reviews of the 1200 significant documents by a group of trained and highly qualified readers.
4. Present a summary of the significant literature regarding reading which has been analyzed and classified by a known and consistently applied set of criteria.

5. Present a synthesis of the information extracted from the analysis of 1200 significant documents to provide at least partial answers to the questions pertaining to the teaching of reading and the reading status of the many sub-populations in the United States.
6. Provide verification of the accuracy of the information obtained from the literature by site visitations to regions reporting reading status and procedures for the teaching of reading that appear to be trend-setting.
7. Present the critical reviews, reports, and syntheses which are the outcomes of this project in a form immediately compatible with the ERIC system of retrieval.

REFERENCE

Name: _____

Date: _____

Hours spent: _____

Reject _____ Accept _____

I. Is this a test of an hypothesis? (experimental, quasi-experimental or demonstration only) YES _____ NO _____

II. Is this an answer to an empirical question? (survey, description, exploratory question or review of literature) YES _____ NO _____

(Now Complete Search List Pages 2, 3, 4)

III. (Answer to Question I is yes) The hypothesis is supported by the author's conclusion(s)?
Not Supported _____ Somewhat Supported _____ Supported _____

IV. (Answer to Questions I or II is yes) Was the quality of the data generation procedure Appropriate _____ Inappropriate _____ N. A _____

V. (Answer to Questions I or II is yes) Was the data analysis Appropriate _____ Inappropriate _____ N. A _____

VI. This article describes the status of Task I _____ Task II _____ Task III _____

VII. Comments:

LEVELS

Pre K _____

K _____

1 _____

2 _____

3 _____

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

11 _____

12 _____

Young _____

Adult (18-25) _____

Adult _____

(25 & up) _____

AGE

4 _____

5 _____

6 _____

7 _____

8 _____

9 _____

10 _____

11 _____

12 _____

13 _____

14 _____

15 _____

16 _____

17 _____

18-25 _____

25+ _____

However Re-
searcher des-
cribes: _____

SEX

Male _____

Female _____

M + F _____

No Info. _____

Other _____

S.E.S.

Lower _____

LL _____

ML _____

UL _____

Middle _____

LM _____

MM _____

UM _____

Upper _____

LU _____

MU _____

UU _____

Name of Scale _____

Description of Scale _____

ETHNICITY

White _____

Black _____

Indian
(Tribe) _____

Cuban _____

Puerto Rican _____

Mexican-Am. _____

Oriental _____

Japanese _____

Chinese _____

Other _____

Other
Mother Tongue _____

Other _____

No Info. _____

GEOGRAPHIC AREA

However Researcher
Describes: _____

ALL MEASURES OF LEARNER POTENTIAL

However Researcher Describes:

Measure (A) _____

Mean _____

S.D. _____

Measure (B) _____

Mean _____

S.D. _____

Measure (C) _____

Mean _____

S.D. _____

Special Population

E.H. _____

E. MR. _____

Deaf _____

Blind _____

Other _____

Define: _____

Ability level of

Subjects:

Low _____

Average _____

High _____

Other kinds of Information: _____

ALL MEASURES OF LEARNER ACHIEVEMENT

However Researcher Describes:

Measure (A) _____

Mean _____

S.D. _____

Measure (B) _____

Mean _____

S.D. _____

Is achievement based on normative data?

If not, describe:

If author has identified any reading sub-skill, copy, annotate and attach appropriate pages.

COSTS OF INSTRUCTION TIME & MATERIALS

Teacher/Pupil Ratio _____

Per Pupil Cost of Instruction _____

Time Required to Teach Method _____

Materials _____

Special Equip. _____

Other _____

METHOD

Meaning Emphasis _____

Code _____

Emphasis _____

Synthetic _____

Analytic _____

Linguistics _____

Modified Alphabet _____

Responsive Envt. _____

Programmed Learning _____

Individualized Reading _____

Language Experience _____

Eclectic or Author's own _____

Researcher's description of method, use quotes or copy and attach _____

Comparison of Methods:

Yes _____

No _____

MATERIALS

Lullivan _____

SRA _____

EDL _____

Ginn _____

Scott _____

Foresman _____

American Books Co. _____

Words in Color _____

ITA _____

Other (list) _____

TYPE OF PROGRAM

Remedial _____

Corrective _____

Developmental _____

TEACHER CHARACTERISTICS

Sex _____
Experience _____
Race/
Ethnicity _____
Style _____
Degrees _____
Other _____

No info. _____

READING PERSONNEL

Teachers:
Pre-School _____
Elementary _____
Jr. High _____
High School _____
Young Adults _____
Adult Educ. _____
Jr. College _____
College _____
Other _____
Reading Specialists
Developmental _____
Remedial _____
Corrective _____
Other _____
Reading Supervisors

Other _____

REQUIREMENTS

State _____
Local _____
Training Inst. _____

Specify:
Method _____

Materials _____

In-Service _____
Pre-Service _____
Other _____

No Info. _____

EVIDENCES OF TEACHING PERFORMANCE AS A CONSEQUENCE OF TRAINING

However Researcher Measures: _____

DATA GENERATION PROCEDURE: REPRESENTATIVENESS

R₅ _____

R₄ _____

R₃ _____

R₂ _____

R₁ _____

Not Appropriate _____

TREATMENT

T₆ _____

T₅ _____

T₄ _____

T₃ _____

T₂ _____

T₁ _____

Not Appropriate _____

DATA ANALYSIS MEASUREMENT

M₅ _____

M₄ _____

M₃ _____

M₂ _____

M₁ _____

Not Appropriate _____

-5-

AUTHOR'S RESULTS

-6-

ABSTRACT: Includes purpose, method, conclusion, and reviewer's critique

List relevant tables, annotate for clarity and interpretation and attach.
Data Tables included are:

Aside from the adequacy of the research, are there any innovative or useful ideas contained in this study? (implications for future research, or ideas the author did not test?) Specify.

-8-

Other bibliography which should be searched: