ABSTRACT
        A study established the extent to which certain
program materials and teaching methods were being utilized in
elementary and middle grades schools in South Dakota. Each district
that operated an elementary grades school, a middle grades school, or
both was sent a two-part survey to complete. A total of 117 of 248
surveys were returned, for a response rate of 48%. The second part of
the survey, focusing on teacher theoretical orientation, was
completed by 77 of the 117 schools. Results indicated that: (1)
teachers used systematic phonics instruction as a regular part of
instruction in South Dakota schools; (2) the programs used were often
programs that were in conjunction with other curriculum; (3) most
schools used eclectic materials as their basal series curriculum for
reading; (4) teachers were eclectic in their selection of teaching
strategies; (5) 94% of teachers indicated that the Stanford
Achievement Test was used in their school district; (6) of the
teachers who responded to the second part of the questionnaire, 75%
had a "skills" orientation to reading, 21% had a "phonics"
orientation to reading, and 4% had a "whole language" orientation to
reading. Findings suggest that a combination of phonics, skills, and
wholistic instruction occurs in the reading programs surveyed. (Six
tables of data are included; the questionnaire is attached.) (RS)

A Survey of Reading Program Materials, Methods, and Teacher Theoretical Orientation in South Dakota Public, Non Public and Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools

Garreth G. Zalud, Ph.D.
The University of South Dakota
218A Delzell Education Center
Vermillion, SD 57069

Maurine V. Richardson, Ed.D.
The University of South Dakota
219 Delzell Education Center
Vermillion, SD 57069

James A. Richardson, Ed.D.
The University of South Dakota
227 Dakotadome
Vermillion, SD 57069

Article Summary

This article describes the results of a state-wide survey of reading materials, methods, and teacher theoretical orientation to reading instruction that was conducted in South Dakota. Each district in the state was sent a two part questionnaire.

Submitted for consideration December 2, 1992.

A Survey of Reading Program Materials, Methods, and Teacher Theoretical Orientation in South Dakota Public, Non Public and Bureau of Indian Affairs Schools

Garreth G. Zalud, Ph.D.
Maurine V. Richardson, Ed.D.
James A. Richardson, Ed.D.
The University of South Dakota

Abstract

A state wide survey of reading materials and practices was conducted. Additionally, teachers were asked to respond to a Theoretical Orientation of Reading Profile. Results indicated that overall, districts tended to select materials and procedures that could best be described as being eclectic. The majority of teachers in this state were found to be skills oriented in their views of reading instruction.

Introduction

The purpose of this study was to establish the extent to which certain program materials and teaching methods were being utilized in elementary and middle grades schools in South Dakota. Additionally, the study focused on identifying the theoretical orientation of the teachers who were using the methods and materials. The information gathered in the study is useful in making decisions regarding materials or methods used and in planning in service or content for teacher education courses.

Description

Subjects and sampling procedure: To obtain a representative sample of the school districts in the state of South Dakota, each district that operated an elementary grades, middle grades, or both school was sent a two-part survey to complete. The only exceptions were the school districts that contracted across state borders for these services. This sample included public, non-public, and Bureau of Indian Affairs schools that have programs within the state. A total of 248 school districts were sent surveys.

A total of 117 surveys were returned. This number represents a 48

percent return. Within the 117 returned surveys, only 77 had completed both parts of the survey. All 117 schools had completed part one of the survey which focused on curriculum materials, tests, and teaching methods utilized. Part two of the survey, which focused on teacher theoretical orientation, was only completed by 77 schools.

The teachers who completed the surveys for their school districts varied in several characteristics. This variance in teaching experience, grade level at which the teacher taught, and highest degree earned was a result of and in accordance with the directions sent with each survey. We wanted a mixture of experienced and inexperienced teachers in the sample.

Instrument used: A two-part questionaire was used to survey the teachers in each school district. Part one (Appendix A) provided the teachers with choices of reading programs, teaching methods, standardized tests, and informal tests. Within each category open ended choices were also possible. Teachers who responded to this part of the survey were asked to indicate which programs, methods, and tests were used in their school district. Part two (Appendix B) provided the respondent with 28 questions designed to determine the teacher's theoretical orientation (DeFord, 1985) and 6 questions which were used to identify the school type/district and characteristics about the teacher completing the form related to experience and grade level. The Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile questions were used with the written permission of the International Reading Association.

Results and Discussion

Part one of the survey examined programs, teaching methods used, and tests used in the schools. An experienced lead person in each district was to have completed this section to reflect the total reading program. Results of this part of the survey are summarized in tables 1 - 5 which follow and are briefly discussed.

The first section of the part one survey focused on identifying specific programs, materials, or approaches that the districts were using to teach reading excluding specific basal reader series. The top ten responses are listed in table 1.

_____

Insert table 1 about here

_____

The results indicate a majority of the schools in the state use a program entitled VoWac as a regular part of their reading program. This is a structured phonics word attack program that is often used in conjunction with other program materials. The program was developed by South Dakota teachers and it is, therefore, not surprising to find its use widespread. Other programs were also used that could be described (Aukermann, 1984) as phonics or linguistic structured phonics programs to a lesser extent. Included in this category are the SRA Basic Reading Program (34%), the Basic Language Skills Program (16%), the Direct Instruction in Teaching Arithmetic and Reading program (13%, the Reading With Phonics program (12%), the Writing to read program (9%), the Sullivan Programmed Reading [linguistic] program (8%), and the Phonetic Keys to Reading [linguistic phonics] program (7%).

Only two programs in the top ten list were not either phonics or linguistic phonics programs. Those were the Beginning to Read Write and Listen program (described as a whole language/eclectic program) and the System 80 Reading Words in Context program (which is a whole word program).

Two conclusions are apparent. First, teachers are using systematic phonics instruction as a regular part of instruction in South Dakota schools. Second, the programs being utilized are often programs that are in conjunction with other curriculum.

The second section of the part 1 survey focused on identifying which basal reader programs were being utilized in South Dakota schools. The series which received the most responses (67%) was published by Houghton Mifflin Company, Incorporated. Scott Foresman and Company was the next most popular series (14%), followed by Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich (9%); Silver Burdett (9%); The MacMillan Publishing Company (9%); J.B. Lippincott Company (9%); Holt, Rinehart and Winston (7%); and Heath (6%).

_____

Insert table 2 about here

_____

Of the top eight series identified, six would likely be described as being eclectic or skills based in the instructional approach to reading. Two would be likely described as being literature based in their approach to instruction in reading. The conclusion reached is that most schools are using eclectic materials as their basal series curriculum for reading.

The third section of the part 1 survey focused on identifying which teaching strategies or tactics were frequently used by teachers to teach reading. The responses in this section were numerous, however a list of the top twenty responses is provided in table 3.

_____

Insert table 3 about here

_____

Four of the first five responses are skills based instruction. However, when one considers the entire list of strategies used frequently, the responses show a balance between wholistic and skills based instruction. The results suggest that teachers in schools in South Dakota are eclectic in their selection of teaching strategies. This finding is also in line with the notions discussed earlier that described basal reading series.

The fourth section of the part 1 survey required teachers to identify which standardized tests were utilized in their school district. The Stanford Achievement Test received the greatest percentage of responses (94%). This is not surprising because it is required by the state for school wide assessment. Two other standardized tests -- the Wechsler Intelligence Test (53%) and the Stanford Binet Intelligence Scale (20%) are often required as part of the screening for placement of children into special programs also appear in the top eleven list.

_____

Insert table 4 about here

_____

Excluding these tests, one finds that most of the remaining tests tend to break reading into subskills components. This is not out of line with the skills aspect of instruction in an eclectic approach to instruction.

The fifth and final section of the part 1 survey focused on identifying which informal measures of reading were frequently used in the school districts. One surprise outcome of this section was that only a few measures were reported frequently and the frequency of response was low.

_____

Insert table 5 about here

_____

Of the top five responses, four could be considered traditional published informal reading inventories. One tended to be slightly different form the others in that it is based on a psycholinguistic theory of reading and treats errors differently than the others. Teachers did not provide many responses to the open ended aspect of this section of the survey. This may suggest that teachers are not using informal assessment to a great extent in their reading programs.

Part two of the survey examined the teachers' theoretical orientation to reading. The directions for completing this part of the survey requested that a teacher different from the one who completed part one of the survey should act as a respondent to this part. Additionally, we suggested that both a primary grades teacher (1-3) and an intermediate grades teacher respond (4-8); and that both new and experienced teachers should get a chance to respond to part two of the survey.

Insert table 6 about here

The results of this part of the survey indicated that the majority of the teachers (75%) who completed the Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile were classified as having a "skills" orientation to reading. The next highest category (21%) represented a "phonics" orientation to reading. Only a few teachers in the sample (4%) had a "whole language" orientation to reading. After looking at the curriculum choices and teaching strategies choices, this is in line with earlier data.

Summary

Recently there has been a great deal of discussion that has tended to polarize positions about reading in our state. However, when teachers were surveyed regarding the materials that they use, the strategies that they use, and the assessment techniques that they use and then asked to respond to a measure of theoretical orientation, the evidence suggests that most districts have taken an eclectic approach to reading instruction. Clearly, a combination of phonics, skills, and wholistic instruction occurs in the reading programs surveyed.

References

Aukermann,, R.C. (1984). Approaches to Beginning Reading (2nd ed.).
New York: John Wiley & Sons

DeFord, D. (1985). Validating the construct of theoretical orientation in
reading instruction. Reading Research Quarterly, 20, 366-367.

Appendix A

Part 1 Survey

Section 1

Directions: Place a check mark by all the programs that are used frequently in your school district.

___ Phonetic Keys to Reading
___ Reading With Phonics
___ A New Time for Phonics
___ DISTAR
___ Basic Language Skills Program
___ Sound Start
___ Writing to Read Program
___ VoWac
___ Alpha Time/Alpha One
___ Merrill Linguistic Readers
___ Miami Linguistic Readers
___ SRA Basic Reading
___ Sullivan Programmed Reading
___ Peabody Rebus Reading Program
___ Language Experiences in Reading
___ System 80 Reading Words in Context
___ Fast Start Read Along Program
___ Spalding Writing Road to Reading
___ Beginning to Read, Write and Listen
___* Please list any other frequently used reading program(s) below.

Section 2

Basal Reader Programs

Directions: Please identify all the basal reader series programs that are frequently/currently being used in your school district.

___ Allyn and Bacon
___ American Book Co.
___ The Economy Company
___ Ginn and Company
___ Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Incorporated
___ Harper and Row
___ Heath
___ Holt, Rinehart and Winston
___ Houghton Mifflin Company Incorporated
___ Laidlaw Brothers
___ J. B. Lippencott Company
___ The MacMillanPublishing Company
___ Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company
___ Open Court Publishing Company
___ Riverside Publishing Company
___ Scott, Foresman, and Company
___ Silver Burdett
___ * Please list any other basal reader program(s) that is/are used frequently/currently in your school district.

** Please indicate copyright date, series name and grade level(s) at which each series is used.

Section 3

Teaching Methods/Tactics

Directions: Please indicate which of the following methods/teaching techniques are used frequently to teach reading in your school district.

___ Directed Reading Activity
___ Directed Reading - Thinking Activity
___ Anticipation Guide
___ Reciprocal Questioning (ReQuest)
___ Author's Chair
___ Dialog Journals
___ Jigsaw
___ Semantic Feature Analysis/ Feature Analysis
___ Word Map
___ Keyword Method
___ Graphic Organizers
___ Study Guides
___ Story Grammars
___ Cloze Exercises
___ Known-Want to Know-Learned (K-W-L)
___ Survey Question Read Recite Review
___ Herringbone Notetaking
___ Language Experience Approach
___ Shared Book Experience (Big Books)
___ Fernald's VAKT
___ Analytic Phonics
___ Synthetic Phonics
___ Choral Reading
___ Repeated Reading
___ Echo Reading
___ Neurological Impress Method]
___ Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading
___* Please indicate (list) any other teaching methods/techniques that are frequently used in your school district to teach reading.

Section 4

Standardized Tests

Directions: Please indicate which standardized tests are frequently used in your school district.

____ Gates-MacGinite Reading Test
____ Nelson Denny Reading Test
____ Woodcock Reading Mastery Test - Revised
____ Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test
____ Durrelll Analysis of Reading Difficulty
____ Diagnostic Reading Scales
____ Botel Reading Inventory
____ Doren Diagnostic Reading Test
____ Gates-McKillcp-Horowitz Reading Diagnostic Tests
____ Gilmore Oral Reading Test
____ The Test of Reading Comprehension
____ Concepts about Print
____ Metropolitan Readings Test
____ Clymer Barrett Prereading Battery
____ Boehm Basic Concepts Test
____ Test of Written Language
____ Wide Range Achievement Test - Revised
____ Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test - Revised
____ Peabody Individual Achievement Test
____ Stanford Achievement Test
____ Iowa Test of Basic Skills
____ Metropolitan Achievement Tests
____ California Achievement Tests
____ Slosson Intelligence Test
____ Wechsler Intelligence Test
____ Stanford - Binet Intelligence Scale
____ * Please indicate (list) any other standardized tests that are frequently used in your school district.

- -

Section 5

Informal Reading Tests

Directions: Please indicate which informal reading tests are frequently used in your school districts.

____ Informal Reading Inventory (Burns and Roe)
____ Bader Reading and Language Inventory
____ Ekwall Reading Inventory
____ Analytical Reading Inventory
____ Basic Reading Inventory
____ Advanced Reading Inventory
____ Qualitative Reading Inventory
____ The Contemporary Classroom Reading Inventory
____ Reading Miscue Inventory
____ * Please indicate (list) any other informal tests that are
     frequently used in your school district.

- -

Appendix B

Part 2 Survey

Directions: Read the following statements, and circle one of the responses that will indicate the relationship of the statement to your feelings about reading.

1. A child needs to be able to verbalize the   1 2 3 4 5
    rules of phonics in order to assure   SA   SD
    proficiency in processing new words.

2. An increase in reading errors is usually   1 2 3 4 5
    related to a decrease in comprehension.   SA   SD

3. Dividing words into syllables according   1 2 3 4 5
    to rules is a helpful instructional practice SA   SD
    for reading new words.

4. Fluency and expression are necessary   1 2 3 4 5
    components of reading that   indicate good SA   SD
    comprehension.

5. Materials for early reading should be   1 2 3 4 5
    written in natural language without   SA   SD
    concern for short, simple words and sentences.

6. When children do not know a word, they   1 2 3 4 5

    should be instructed to sound out its parts SA   SD

7. It is a good practice to allow children to 1 2 3 4 5
    edit what is written into their own   SA   SD
    dialect when learning to read.

8. The use of a glossary or dictionary is   1 2 3 4 5
    necessary in determining the meaning and SA   SD
    pronunciation of new words.

15

9. Reversals (e.g., saying "saw" for "was") 1 2 3 4 5
   are significant problems in the teaching SA   SD
   of reading.

10. It is a good practice to correct a child 1 2 3 4 5
    as soon as an oral reading mistake is made SA   SD

11. It is important for a word to be repeated 1 2 3 4 5
    a number of times after it has been   SA   SD
    introduced to insure that it will become
    a part of sight vocabulary.

12. Paying close attention to punctuation   1 2 3 4 5
    marks is necessary to understanding any   SA   SD
    content.

13. It is a sign of an ineffective reader when 1 2 3 4 5
    words and phrases are repeated.   SA   SD

14. Being able to label words according to   1 2 3 4 5
    grammatical function (nouns, etc.) is   SA   SD
    useful in proficient reading.

15. When coming to a word that's unknown, the 1 2 3 4 5
    reader should be encouraged to guess upon SA   SD
    meaning and go on.

16. Young readers need to be introduced to the 1 2 3 4 5
    root forms of words (run, long) before they SA   SD
    are asked to read inflected forms (running,
    longest).

17. It is not necessary for a child to know   1 2 3 4 5

    the letters of the alphabet in order to   SA   SD
    learn to read.

18. Flashcard drills with sightwords is an   1 2 3 4 5

unnecessary form of practice in reading SA   SD
Instruction.

19. Ability to use accent patterns in multi-   1 2 3 4 5
syllable words (pho' to graph,   SA   SD
pho to' gra phy, and pho to gra' phic)
should be developed as part of reading
instruction.

20. Controlling text through consistent spelling 2 3 4 5
patterns (The fat cant ran back. The fat   SA   SD
cat sat on a hat) is a means by which
children can best learn to read.

21. Formal instruction in reading is necessary 1 2 3 4 5
to insure the adequate development of all   SA   SD
the skills used in reading.

22. Phonic analysis is the most important form 2 3 4 5
of analysis used when meeting new words.SA   SD

23. Children's initial encounters with print 1 2 3 4 5
should focus on meaning, not upon exact   SA   SD
graphic representation.

24. Word shapes (word configuration) should 1 2 3 4 5
be taught in reading to aid in word   SA   SD
recognition.

25. It is important to teach skills in relation 1 2 3 4 5
to other skills.   SA   SD

26. If a child says "house" for the written   1 2 3 4 5
word "home," the response should be left SA   SD
uncorrected.

27. It is not necessary to introduce new words 2 3 4 5
before they appear in the reading text.   SA   SD

28. Some problems in reading are caused by   1 2 3 4 5

readers dropping the inflectional endings S A   SD
from words (e.g., jumps, jumped).

(Reprinted with permission of the International Reading
Association.)

Table 1

Frequently Used Reading Programs

PROGRAM	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
1. VoWac	62%
2. SRA Basic Reading	34%
3. Basic Language Skills Program	16%
4. DISTAR	13%
5. Reading With Phonics	12%
6. Writing to Read Program	9%
7. Sullivan Programmed Reading	8%
8. Phonetic Keys to Reading	7%
9. Beginning to Read Write and Listen	7%
10. System 80 Reading Words in Context	6%

*All others 4% or less.

Table 2

Frequently Used Basal Reading Programs

PROGRAM	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
1. Houghton Mifflin Company, Inc.	67%
2. Scott, Foresman and Company	14%
3. Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc.	9%
4. Silver Burdett	9%
5. The Macmillan Publishing Co.	9%
6. J.B. Lippincott Co.	9%
7. Holt, Rinehart and Winston	7%
8. Heath	6%

*All others less than 4%

Table 3

Frequently Used Teaching Tactics or Strategies

TACTIC/STRATEGY	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
1. Directed Reading Activity	84%
2. Choral Reading	69%
3. Question-Answer-Relationship	67%
4. Guided Reading Procedure	67%
5. Survey-Question-Read-Recite-Review	61%
6. Uninterrupted Sustained Silent Reading	61%
7. Language Experience Approach	58%
8. Shared Book Experience	55%
9. Study Guides	52%
10. Repeated Readings	47%
11. Dialog Journals	41%
12. Cloze Exercises	41%
13. Analytic Phonics	34%
14. Echo Reading	27%
15. Word Maps	27%
16. Story Grammars	25%

17. Author's Chair   23%

18. Keyword   20%

19. Synthetic Phonics   16%

20. Known-Want to Know-Learned   13%

* All others 12 percent or less.

_____

Table 4

Frequently Used Standardized Tests

TEST	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
1. Stanford Achievement Test	94%
2. Woodcock Reading Mastery Test - Revised	69%
3. Wechsler Intelligence Test	53%
4. Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test- Revised	48%
5. Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test	28%
6. Wide Range Achievement Test - Revised	28%
7. Peabody Individual Achievement Test	22%
8. Stanford - Binet Intelligence Scale	20%
9. Gates - MacGinite Reading Test	20%
10. Test of Written Language	15%
11. Boehm Basic Concepts Test	15%

*All others are 14% or less.

Table 5

Frequently Used Informal Reading Tests

INFORMAL READING TEST	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
1. Basic Reading Inventory	25%
2. Burns and Roe Informal Reading Inventory	23%
3. Reading Miscue Inventory	8%
4. Ekwall Reading Inventory	7%
5. The Contemporary Classroom Reading Inventory	2%
* All others 1% or less.	

Table 6

Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile Results

ORIENTATION	PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES
1. Phonics	21%
2. Skills	75%
3. Whole Language	4%