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

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

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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 questionnaire 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.
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%).
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.

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.
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.

Of the top five responses, four could be considered traditional published informal reading inventories. One tended to be slightly different from 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.
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


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.

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10
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 MacMillan Publishing 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.

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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-MacGinitie Reading Test
___ Nelson Denny Reading Test
___ Woodcock Reading Mastery Test - Revised
___ Stanford Diagnostic Reading Test
___ Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty
___ Diagnostic Reading Scales
___ Botel Reading Inventory
___ Doren Diagnostic Reading Test
___ Gates-McKillip-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 rules of phonics in order to assure proficiency in processing new words.  
   - [ ] 1
   - [ ] 2
   - [ ] 3
   - [ ] 4
   - [ ] 5

2. An increase in reading errors is usually related to a decrease in comprehension.  
   - [ ] 1
   - [ ] 2
   - [ ] 3
   - [ ] 4
   - [ ] 5

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

4. Fluency and expression are necessary components of reading that indicate good comprehension.  
   - [ ] 1
   - [ ] 2
   - [ ] 3
   - [ ] 4
   - [ ] 5

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

6. When children do not know a word, they should be instructed to sound out its parts.  
   - [ ] 1
   - [ ] 2
   - [ ] 3
   - [ ] 4
   - [ ] 5

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

8. The use of a glossary or dictionary is necessary in determining the meaning and pronunciation of new words.  
   - [ ] 1
   - [ ] 2
   - [ ] 3
   - [ ] 4
   - [ ] 5
9. Reversals (e.g., saying "saw" for "was") are significant problems in the teaching of reading.

10. It is a good practice to correct a child as soon as an oral reading mistake is made.

11. It is important for a word to be repeated a number of times after it has been introduced to insure that it will become a part of sight vocabulary.

12. Paying close attention to punctuation marks is necessary to understanding any content.

13. It is a sign of an ineffective reader when words and phrases are repeated.

14. Being able to label words according to grammatical function (nouns, etc.) is useful in proficient reading.

15. When coming to a word that's unknown, the reader should be encouraged to guess meaning and go on.

16. Young readers need to be introduced to the root forms of words (run, long) before they are asked to read inflected forms (running, longest).

17. It is not necessary for a child to know the letters of the alphabet in order to learn to read.

18. Flashcard drills with sightwords is an
unnecessary form of practice in reading instruction.

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

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

21. Formal instruction in reading is necessary to insure the adequate development of all the skills used in reading.

22. Phonic analysis is the most important form of analysis used when meeting new words.

23. Children's initial encounters with print should focus on meaning, not upon exact graphic representation.

24. Word shapes (word configuration) should be taught in reading to aid in word recognition.

25. It is important to teach skills in relation to other skills.

26. If a child says "house" for the written word "home," the response should be left uncorrected.

27. It is not necessary to introduce new words before they appear in the reading text.

28. Some problems in reading are caused by
readers dropping the inflectional endings SA SD from words (e.g., jumps, jumped).

(Reprinted with permission of the International Reading Association.)
Table 1

Frequently Used Reading Programs

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

*All others 4% or less.*
Table 2
Frequently Used Basal Reading Programs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PROGRAM</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Houghton Mifflin Company, Inc.</td>
<td>67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Scott, Foresman and Company</td>
<td>14%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich, Inc.</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Silver Burdett</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The Macmillan Publishing Co.</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. J.B. Lippincott Co.</td>
<td>9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Holt, Rinehart and Winston</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Heath</td>
<td>6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>*All others less than 4%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 3

Frequently Used Teaching Tactics or Strategies

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

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

*All others are 14% or less.*
Table 5

Frequently Used Informal Reading Tests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>INFORMAL READING TEST</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Basic Reading Inventory</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Burns and Roe Informal Reading Inventory</td>
<td>23%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Reading Miscue Inventory</td>
<td>8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Ekwall Reading Inventory</td>
<td>7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. The Contemporary Classroom Reading Inventory</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>* All others 1% or less.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


Table 6
Theoretical Orientation to Reading Profile Results

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>ORIENTATION</th>
<th>PERCENTAGE OF RESPONSES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Phonics</td>
<td>21%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Skills</td>
<td>75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Whole Language</td>
<td>4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>