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THE USE OF POETRY

IN REMEDIATION

A dissertation  
presented in fulfilment  
of the requirements for the Degree of

MASTER IN EDUCATION

by

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## ABSTRACT

This dissertation presents an evaluation of a new method of teaching reading by means of a handbook for teachers and a workbook for children who have not learnt reading after being taught by the traditional methods in the classroom.

The method uses poetry, mainly in doggerel and limerick form, assembled into a sequential and meaningful reading/spelling programme which, together with reference to phonics workbooks and reading books, trains the beginner reader up to the level of reading literacy.

Research on the literature available shows that poetry has not yet been used as a total remedial programme.

The efficacy of the need for remediation is examined, and remediation methods analysed for what they should include. Other avenues of remediation are explored, such as the gross and fine motor and perceptual schools of thought, and the language and auditory orientation to remediation, into which the Poetry Method neatly fits.

Psychological theories - such as the behaviourist operative reward systems and the ideas of phenomenologists such as Rogers - that total healing can come about through renewed motivation and growth in self-esteem, are shown to be included in the Poetry Method.

Four studies evaluating the Poetry Method were conducted:

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### 1. Study One

Questionnaires were sent to ex-pupils, their parents and to student teachers who taught the Poetry Method using Book 1 in a one-to-one situation, in order to evaluate the perception of the effectiveness of the Poetry Method and its actual effectiveness. Results on an analysis of the results obtained by students who answered the questionnaire show a substantially significant improvement above normal expected improvement on tests for reading accuracy and comprehension, spelling and visual-motor integration.

### 2. Study Two

This was a comparison between three groups of reading scores: 90 beginner remedial pupils on the Poetry Method; 90 beginner remedial pupils on another method, and 90 beginner readers with no problems from Grade 1 or Grade 2 at a local school. Results showed that the mean improvement rate of the Poetry Method group was two months above the average beginner group, and one and a half years above the other remedial group ( $p < 0,001$ ).

### 3. Study Three

One hundred subjects, given reading accuracy and comprehension tests, spelling and visual-motor integration tests taken before and after the teaching of the Poetry Method, were compared to the results expected from normal growth over the same period taken from standardization tests. Results again showed statistically significant improvements of nine months to one and a half years on the four tests, with levels of significance of  $p < 0,001$ .

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#### 4. Study Four

The results of the 60 student teachers who administered the programme during the years 1985 to 1987 were analysed to see whether there was again a substantial improvement, this time on five tests, as a phonics reading test was included with the above four tests on reading, spelling and visual-motor integration. Results showed that despite a varied number of lessons given, there was an improvement in the pupils' results well above the natural expected improvement.

The results of these statistical analyses support the hypotheses:

- 1) That the pupils replying to the questionnaire and who had been taught the Poetry Method over a range of time during the past 13 years showed a significant improvement from pre-test to post-test on reading, spelling and visual-motor integration, significant enough to allow for the probability that the Poetry Method was responsible for this change.
- 2) That in a comparison of remedial pupils using the Poetry Method against those using other methods, those having been taught by the Poetry Method improved in reading accuracy scores as measured by the Neale Accuracy Reading Ability Test significantly more than remedial pupils using other methods. This was not the case when scores were compared to those of normal readers.
- 3) That the Poetry Method significantly improves scores on reading, spelling and visual-motor integration tests above the normal expected natural age improvement.

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- 4) That even though no specific perceptual training is included in the form of shape training or other perceptual training within the Poetry Method, the visual-motor integration scores of the pupils significantly improved as measured by the pre- and post-tests using the Beery Test of Visual-Motor Integration.
  - 5) That the Poetry Method taught by unqualified, inexperienced trainee teachers produces results comparable to those of the researcher.

The implications of the above results are that significant results occur for remedial pupils other than beginner remedial readers, and that variables such as number of lessons do not seriously effect results. Change and development of the method over 13 years has not affected the results, it is the basic idea of a new phonic sound each week and the use of poetry containing that sound for reading that motivates the child sufficiently to change his reading/spelling attitude.

The Poetry Method helps beginner remedial readers back to an average standard of reading but cannot surpass the large jumps that take place in the scores of normal beginner readers.

The Poetry Method results show that those who suggest visual-motor training should take place within the reading/spelling context rather than through picture and shape copying are correct, as perceptual problems no longer appear to dominate as reading/spelling progresses.

The most important implications of the findings were that since results of the students were not dissimilar to those of the researcher, any teacher, remedially

trained or not, can use this method on a one-to-one basis or in her classroom. It could even be used by parents given the same amount of pre-use training as the students in the method.

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**DECLARATION**

I, CLAUDIA DONALDSON-SELBY, declare that this work is my own original work and has not been submitted before now, in any form whatsoever, by myself or anyone else, to this university or to any other educational institution for assessment purposes.

Further, I have acknowledged all sources used and have cited these in the bibliography. There has been no infringement of publishers' copyright stipulations.

I understand that any breach of this declaration may result in non-acceptance of this work by those concerned.

SIGNED:

*Claudia Donaldson-Selby*

DATE:

*18<sup>th</sup> September, 1987*

**DEDICATION**

To my mother, Doris Emdon, who wrote the poems for the book which inspired this research, to John and Sarah-Jane for their wholehearted support, and to all those children who believed in poetry.

The sage Uddalaka illustrates with a story how the teacher liberates the pupil:

Just as someone, my dear, might abduct a person blindfolded from the country of the Gandharas, and leave him in a place where there were no human beings, and just as that person would turn toward the east, or the north, or the south, or the west, shouting: "I have been brought here blindfolded, I have been left here blindfolded."

And as therefore someone might remove the bandages from his eyes and say to him: "Gandhara is in that direction. Go that way", and as therefore having received advice and being wise, he would be asking his way from one village to another, arrive at last at Gandhara - in exactly the same manner does a person achieve who has found a teacher to instruct him attain the knowledge he is seeking.

(Swami Satprakashananda, 1965.268)

Sincere thanks and admiration for his supervision of this study are offered by the researcher to Professor Robert Burns - author of seven books and teacher amongst the greats.

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A poetry remedial programme. Book 1 includes a manual for teachers and a workbook for children.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1. Remedial Therapy

There are many headmasters and parents who, in spite of the fact that remedial education has proved its worth for two decades, deny the advantages of what is called 'extra lessons'. Their argument is that the child should take the responsibility of self-improvement upon himself. They ignore the possibility that specific learning problems may hamper the child and he is still in many cases labelled as 'lazy'.

Fortunately, with the spread of ideas on the subject through research, the media and organisations for parents and teachers, there is no doubt that at least those ten to fifteen percent (Murray Report, 1969 and 1979) of each class who cannot read or spell up to standard have some sort of auditory, perceptual, motor or language disability that can be remediated.

In Cape Town there is an excellent system of itinerant remedial teachers visiting the schools of the city, offering remedial help to those children with learning problems and learning disabilities up to the level of Std 1.\* The problem is that the clinics, child guidance centres and Red Cross day hospitals are overloaded with remedial cases and above Std 1 level there is little help available. The situation is similar in Natal and the Orange Free State. Since the structure of Government schools in the Transvaal is such that no remedial

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\* Throughout this study the first three years of school follow the Transvaal naming (since the bulk of the pupils came from the Transvaal), as follows: Grade i, Grade ii and Std I are equivalent to Sub A, Sub B and Std 1 in the Cape and to the American/Australian Grade 1, Grade 2 and Grade 3.

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aid is offered other than aid classes in the first three years (unless the school employs a remedially trained teacher as part of its staff), the private remedial teacher can offer substantial help to those learning problem children. By receiving the help privately after school these children will stay in the main-stream and benefit from all the normal activities of the school, and their problem can be understood and worked on at the same time.

This emphasizes the role that the *didactical aid teacher* (D.A.T. - after Chalfant 1978) and the *private remedial teacher* must play in our society. The *former* is a specialised teacher in Didactical Remediation who is able to teach three to four children after school in groups and help them to catch up to the rest of the class. The *private remedial teacher* is one who is involved with the child for half an hour to an hour per week in one or two sessions in a one-to-one working relationship. This one-to-one situation is a therapeutic time in which the child will not only share his work problems but has the opportunity to talk about his feelings and social and emotional problems that he has encountered that week.

## 1.2. The Importance of Innovative Approaches to Remedial Teaching

In remediation, the task of the teacher is to break through old attitudes to work and to re-educate the child through innovative means. Teaching in the manner that the teacher has used in the classroom is unlikely to encourage motivation and renewed interest in spelling and reading in the child. By introducing a *novel approach* to learning and by breaking old habits with methods that re-form behaviour, one can make the lesson fun. If the child feels good and discovers that work need not be a drudge but can be stimulating

and exciting and, most important of all, that it gives him rewards that he never receives in the normal classroom, he will rediscover a love for learning.

Most private remedial teachers using the child's school books as a guide to his deficiencies, build up training programmes, using an assortment of grammar and comprehension books, spelling lists and educational games that are marketed today. In this dissertation, a poetry\* method is explored.

### 1.3. The History of the Poetry Method

The Poetry Method is a method that has developed to its present format over fourteen years of one-to-one remedial teaching of children varying in ability from pre-school to matric.

The researcher had taught in junior schools for five years - classes varying from Grade i to Std 1, and had run a private speech and drama studio for three years prior to completing a remedial diploma. Combining the methods used in the teaching of reading to non-readers, phonics to non-spellers and poetry as for performance in an Eisteddfod or speech examination, the poetry method was invented.

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\* Poetry has been defined (Ted Hughes, 1967) as "perfect thought, perfectly expressed, and not necessarily subject to the laws of versification". Verse is composition entirely dependent on rhyme, rhythm and metre.

Since pure poetry, verse, limericks, riddles, tongue-twisters and doggerel are all included in the Poetry Method, they will be referred to as "poems" or "poetry".

The researcher is the only person to have taught the Poetry Method up to 1985 and by that time it had been used for remediation on approximately 600 children. These children were taught, individually, a course of 15 to 40 weekly one hour lessons. The total programme covers 40 weeks of lessons.

Since 1985 the researcher has had the opportunity to teach fourth year Junior Work student teachers the Poetry Method. Up to September 1987 sixty-five student teachers have used this method on children from Grade 1 to Grade 4 on a one-to-one basis in a remediation programme lasting between 10 and 20 lessons.

In 1983 the Poetry Method was compared to a machine reading method for a Bachelor of Education dissertation (University of the Witwatersrand). That study tested its efficacy on nine to eleven year-old remedial pupils as differentiated from the present study on beginner readers and proved that the poetry method was a viable and relevant one. Results on the statistical analysis of the results of post-testing of those remedial pupils (Donaldson-Selby, 1983;64) show that the Poetry Method increased reading *accuracy* and *spelling* ability - as compared to a machine method which caused an improvement in the *vocabulary* level and in the *speed* of reading.

(The pupil, whether boy or girl, will be referred to as "he/him/his".)

## CHAPTER 1

### 1. BACKGROUND AND CHARACTERISTICS OF THE POETRY METHOD

The Poetry Method, a new approach to remedial teaching, has grown into being as a result of over thirteen years of private remedial teaching in a one-to-one situation.

Before taking on private remedial pupils, the researcher had had experience in teaching *class Hebrew* to beginners, reading and spelling to Grade i and Grade ii children in school using several different methods and ran a private *speech and drama studio* for a couple of years, teaching children singly or in small groups in Johannesburg.

The problem that presented itself in remedial teaching appeared to be how to teach the sounds required in *spelling* and how to teach *reading* to children who had had no success with either of these, and yet to make it so interesting that the children would be re-motivated to try reading again. The main focus, when re-motivating as Greenhart suggested (Crystal, 1984), should be to change the learning environment and the academic requirements so the children will learn and succeed in spite of a deficiency.

#### 1.1. The Background to the *Teaching of Spelling* in the Poetry Method

Hebrew is a phonetic language and is easily taught by presenting sounds in order of priority of usage. In the researcher's first year of school teaching in

1966, reading was taught through the 'Look-and-say' method using the Beacon Readers. Since the Grade ii class at the time happened to be poor spellers, there was considerable phonic work done, drilling the children in the sounds systematically starting from the short sounds, blends, digraphs and long sounds through to the irregular long sounds. This worked so well that in the following year when teaching a Sub B class through the method of the Initial Teaching Alphabet (Pitman, 1969), as they switched to reading through Traditional Orthography (TO), the researcher taught them spelling again, phonic sound by phonic sound - as if TO was a new language. The personal or 'creative' writing of this group was very exciting. The i.t.a. method had allowed a free phonetic base to spelling, then gradually as the TO sounds were taught, the children integrated them quite naturally into their personal writing. This manner of presenting the phoneme groups and basing the rest of the lesson around these sounds became the basis for the means of teaching spelling in the Poetry Method.

## 1.2. The Background to the Teaching of *Reading* in the Poetry Method

For the teacher, listening to the daily reading of her class pupils from Basal readers is an excruciating experience (see Boring Readers, 6.2). On the other hand, listening to children reading and reciting poetry when preparing them for speech examinations and for Eisteddfods was so rewarding to the researcher, that on starting remedial teaching, poems were searched for that would suit the *Reading age* of each remedial pupil. The children would prepare these poems at home and during the lesson they would act them out or they would be tape-recorded reading, sometimes with added sound effects in the background. The school readers or equivalent level high-interest books were not forgotten and

were used for silent reading at home and questions were asked on or around their content during the lesson.

1.3. Characteristics of the Poetry Method (Layout as per Feurenstein, 1980; pp 405-410)

Programme Characteristics

Poetry Method

General Goal:

To offer a means of reading through poetry - quite different to any method the child may have used in the classroom for the purpose of remediation of reading.

Specific Sub-goals:

Correction of specific auditory and visual learning problems.  
Acquisition of vocabulary and improved oral reading expression.  
Production of intrinsic motivation for transfer to all reading.  
Formation of habits.  
Creation of increased self esteem through successful performance.  
Gaining a solid grounding in the phonic sounds and spelling rules.  
Shift from non-reader to that of a literate reader with reading age  $\pm$  8,5 years.

Target Population:

Ages 6 1/2 years to adulthood.

Level of Functioning:

IQ in the normal range and above for children to age 13 years.  
60 IQ to 90 IQ for adults or illiterate teenagers.

Certain learning disabilities, oral reading or spelling difficulties ) ) ) ) for normal or gifted

Programme Characteristics

Poetry Method

Minimal Abilities:

Vocabulary age 5 years upwards.  
Minimal visual-motor functioning.  
Ability to reproduce words via paper and pencil or typewriter keyboard.  
Reasonably normal hearing and visual acuity.

Scholastic Achievement:

Must have spent at least one or more years in a school classroom and shown to be unsuccessful in reading and spelling.

Types of Motivation:

- Task-intrinsic.
- ✓ Socially reinforced through teacher interaction on a one-to-one basis.
- ✓ Psychological acceptance and love of a dimension other than that offered in a classroom.
- ✓ Material reward such as stars and small prizes given according to behaviourist principles.
- ✓ Accessible for many scholastically unmotivated children.

Etiology and Pathological Entity:

- Slow, dull and unmotivated readers.
- ✓ Those with spelling and reading problems.
- ✓ Those with learning disabilities, particularly in the auditory and language parameters.
- ✓ Certain perceptual deficits such as eye movements and visual motor integration, etc.

Settings:

Individual tutorial setting.  
Small DAT groups.  
Classroom group teaching.

Teachers:

Teachers of all races who can speak English.  
Remedial teachers.  
Parents who may have no access to remedial teachers, e.g. in country towns, once their child has been tested.

Optimal Time Framework:

3/4 hour to 1 hour weekly for at least 20-30 weeks to see lasting change.  
The full programme is 40 weeks in length.

Programme Characteristics

Poetry Method

Scholastic Framework:

Complementary to regular curriculum.  
Complementary to any other method of reading or spelling used in the classroom.  
Extracurricular material for private lessons outside of schools.

Nature of Materials:

Handbook for teacher.  
Workbook for child or papers given to the child for him to place in a file. The workbook includes readiness exercises in handwriting, auditory & perceptual training, two or more poems per lesson and spelling lists on each sound.  
Suggested choice of phonics workbook pages and suggested short and complete storybooks for home reading.

Book 1	-	complete
Book 2 RA 8-1/2 - 10 yrs	-	incomplete
+ Book 3 RA 10-13 yrs	-	incomplete

Rhythm of Work:

Contingent upon setting.  
In classroom group mastery with individualized attention, as necessary.  
In tutorial settings, individualized and flexible.

Nature of Peer Interaction:

As audience in classroom situation.  
As role players in dramatizing or reading of poems in class or at home.

Interaction with Teacher and the teacher's role:

Presentation of poem either as a model or through Impress, Assisted or Echo reading.  
Producing insightful feelings on the poems and enlarging vocabulary.  
Revising the work of the week before through written dictation, or acting as audience to the read performance of the poems, or tape recording the readings.

Programme CharacteristicsPoetry Method

- Teaching the child the phonics sound of the present week through spelling lists, poems & phonic work. Listening with empathy and understanding.
- Producing motivation by means of reinforcement and shaping better reading, handwriting & spelling through reward.
- Enhancing self-esteem in the child through acceptance empathy and high expectations.

## Nature of Exercises:

- Spelling lists of two dozen or more words all containing the phoneme to be presented that week.
- Poems including many words with the same sound.
- The same sounds are included in 3-4 phonic work pages, and if possible in the storybooks chosen.

## Nature of Activity:

- The child prepares at home for each lesson by learning the spelling (supervised by the parent), practising the reading of the poems, filling in phonics work pages & reading the storybook.
- During the lesson the child writes the spelling words and a sentence or two of dictation, reads or acts the poems, talks about content of the book and presents completed phonic pages.
- All work done is rewarded & corrected immediately.

## Nature of Sequence:

- After the first 4 weeks of readiness work, each lesson follows a similar structure with repetition of the principles.
- The total programme is graded in difficulty with the sounds taught rising up the hierarchy from simple short vowels through to digraphs, blends, long vowels and irregular vowels. The poems change through the weeks very gradually in complexity of vocabulary and conceptual content.

Programme Characteristics

Poetry Method

4. Services Given to Teachers:

Handbook with instructions on sequence and content of every lesson.  
Pre-teaching lectures and workshops given to student teachers.  
Modelling through video of the researcher teaching and watching actual teaching.  
Support visits given to the students when they teach in a one-to-one situation.  
Post-teaching analysis and discussion.

Spill-over Effects of Programme:-

1. Teacher:

Training and experience of the Poetry Method changes the teacher's perception of the child:- in his evaluation and expectation of the child's ability to learn to write spelling and read; in his feeling of joy and excitement and fulfilment at the changes in the child from depression to happiness and from lack of interest to high motivation.

Knowledge of the step-by-step structure of the Poetry Method may make the teacher more sensitive to aspects of teaching necessary for changes in reading & spelling ability and changes in self concept in the child.

2. Child:

Increased willingness to cope with school English language work.  
Increased motivation & school attendance.  
Heightened self-image.

**Summary**

The Poetry Method grew out of a need of teaching the sounds used in spelling and the teaching of reading in ways other than those in current use in the classroom. When analysed as a bona-fide method, it appears to fit the sub-areas of practicality and usefulness to both the teacher and the pupil.

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## CHAPTER 2

### 2. THE EFFICACY OF REMEDIATION

#### 2.1 Directed Learning

Individualized teaching or remedial help is generally regarded as necessary if the pupil is functioning significantly below either class or individual expectations in one or more areas of work. Too often a child is required to struggle on assignments above his or her capabilities or is expected to read via the one and possibly only approach used by the class teacher.

Kephart has shown in his book *The Slow Learner in the Classroom* (1971) that incidental learning is slow and uncertain in comparison to directed learning. Once the specific skill deficits have been recognised, a special programme can be built up to suit the pupil's needs, level and learning style (Myklebust and Johnson, 1967; Bush and Giles, 1977; Schifani, 1980; Cosford, 1982).

#### 2.2 Studies Negating Remediation

Several studies have shown that remediation of a child outside the class situation has negligible effects. Collins, 1961; Oliver and Boyd, 1961; Lytton, 1967 (in Widlake 1971), have found in various studies that reading could be accelerated by remedial help, but that the long-term effects were not remarkable and there was no measurable influence on social maturity and personality development.

It was found by Lytton, 1967 (in Widlake Ed, 1971; 93) that those who benefited most from remedial help were children of higher intelligence and those children who were supported by the class teacher's liaison and encouragement along with that of the remedial teacher.

Cashdan and Pumfey in 1969 (ibid.) found that after comparing a group of children who had received help for twenty-two months with those who had had no help, there was no difference between the treated and untreated group. They believed that the natural improvement of the control group was due to indirect help from class teachers and relief of pressure if some of their classmates were being helped.

A further study done by the same couple (1971) on 1 200 retarded readers with reading ages in two groups - those just under nine and those of six years, receiving remedial help twice a week for eleven months, showed that in spite of reading gains of up to twenty-one months, these effects were short-term and results depended largely on independent variation.

A study done by the Cape Town Child Guidance Clinic (Egnal, 1969) found that children given an equal number of remedial lessons compared with those just given psychotherapy, showed equal reading and spelling scores at the end of the year, suggesting that it is the *contact* with somebody in a nurturing context that helps the child.

Lawrence, 1971 (in Widlake Ed. 1971; 103), found that nine year-olds given twenty minutes of Rogerian counselling with or without remedial help, showed

considerably more reading improvement than was shown when remedial help was given alone, besides showing positive personality changes.

It would seem from the above results that remediation seems to be an unnecessary waste of time and money, so why bother?

### 2.3 The Effects of the Teacher Style

Smith (in Dechant Ed., 1977) says that what is remedial for one child may be developmental for another. So there are some children who have to re-learn work already taught to them and others who due to a developmental lag were not ready to learn when the work was originally presented. Young (ibid p. 51) says the method is unimportant whereas the *teacher* is important. According to Ekwall and Shenkar (Ekwall, 1973), some pupils are remedial cases entirely because of their *teachers*. By her general use of an *eclectic* approach, the teacher may not have given sufficient teaching to a pupil with a predisposition for learning through only one particular approach. On the other hand, she may have *only used one method* in which some students flourish but others are doomed to failure.

Children with learning problems are stuck in a morass of negativity. They cannot set themselves future goals because they see themselves as present failures - unable to read or spell and unable to please teachers, parents and even peers. In spite of what method is used, the therapeutic possibilities offered in the one-to-one situation of remedial teaching give the opportunities for growth as suggested by Carl Rogers (Crombach, 1977; Brammer and Shostrom, 1977; Sprinthall and Sprinthall, 1981). During these periods the

child can feel the caring of his remedial teacher (see 9.6). If she listens to him with faith, non-judgementally and empathetically:

utilise his cognitive capacities, live harmoniously with himself at his centre, and function effectively in the interpersonal world.

(Rogers in Brammer and Shostrom, 1977:111)

#### 2.4 In Favour of Remediation

NB

There are several theories of learning that back up the reasons for taking the child out of the school situation and giving him extra help and attention.

According to Solley (1960), the child who has continually failed to win recognition at school because of poor reading and spelling, will have a poor Gestalt of his worth. His perceptual and cognitive set of himself will prevent motivation to change. The task of the remedial teacher in this case is to *change* the picture he has of himself and to allow occasion for positive performance.

The Skinnerian approach to the child with a learning problem would be to operate on the child's environment, changing it in such a way that the child, the "active organism" (Hjelle and Ziegler, 1976) need not be controlled by the environment in an unmotivated or negative way. By reshaping the child's *attitude* to work and homework and by training his reading and spelling, he can re-enter his classroom environment with renewed confidence and energy.

Besides this, if the child has learned a fear of reading, this fear can be systematically unlearned by 'reversing the respondent model' (MacMillan, 1973; 51) in a remedial situation. The teacher must re-teach specific skills in a manner which does not resemble the format associated with failure in the past.

The children in this study are to be thought of as "beginner" readers. Since most of them are in the second or third year of school and have not yet grasped the groundwork rules of spelling and reading, these must be presented to them so that they can proceed to the next stage of reading required from them.

Zintz (1975) believes that once the children have passed the first two grades, there is an absence of a sequentially organized programme to develop reading skills. The child has been taught to identify new words and begin comprehension, but higher reading skills, the stimulation of thinking beyond the literal passages of what is being read, speed and training in the spelling rules hierarchy, are neglected or only taught superficially in a classroom. The remedial teacher can offer these skills.

Nisbet in a 1939 study on spelling (ibid;207) found that the average child picks up the spelling of only one new word out of every 25 new words that he reads. His proficiency greatly increases if methods of learning to spell are systematically learnt. So we should actually *teach* spelling, not just wait for it to be picked up by extra reading.

Many children stick in a middle or low average position in class. Remediation can jolt them to a new sense of worth and so re-motivate a new ambition to change their placing in class performance.

In an article in *Time Magazine* of May 5, 1986(48), it was put forward by an official of the U.S. Department of Education that 17 to 21 million adults under the age of 50 cannot read, and that two million more illiterates appear in society every year. Remediation of English can be an important part of a literacy programme, particularly in a country of such varied language backgrounds as South Africa.

If, as has been found, many learning problem children have not yet attained the perceptual, auditory, or even the primary motor ability to function at the next level required, then Remediation is absolutely necessary to prepare them for the next level (Myklebust and Johnson, 1967; Kephart, 1971; Kirk and Chalfant, 1984).

Other aspects of remediation that are seldom mentioned are:

- \* The "halo-effect" and the "Hawthorne Effect" - the magical restoring process that devoting one's full attention and making him the centre of interest can give to a child.
  
- \* The relieving parents of guilt because of the child's learning problem (Kaslow, 1984) and treating and offering new choices to the "index patient", or scapegoat, the role the child may play in the family. Maslow (1970) would refer to his hierarchy of needs as an argument in favour of remediation. The child cannot hope to improve in the classroom situation if his more basic needs of "safety" of belongingness to a group, and those of "esteem" gained from teacher and

---

parents, are continually thwarted by his failure in reading and spelling.

\* The love and care and nurturing given to the child during the one-to-one situation is healing and calming and the child who has a poor relationship with his mother or teacher may regain sufficient ego strength to cope with his world.

✓\* Remediation speeds up the learning of reading. Learning to read is a means of social acceptance. It opens up boundaries to imagination, and new dimensions of fantasy, and offers enlarged opportunities for ✓ creativity and knowledge.

Although one-to-one remedial teaching is an expensive, élitist manner of coping with a learning problem, this understanding, encouraging and sharing of enthusiasm is of best benefit in a one-to-one situation when the prime healing processes can take place between the child and teacher (Sapir and Nitzburg, 1973; Belkin, 1979; Schmind et al, 1977).

### Conclusion

[ It appears to be of more benefit to the child to offer him remedial help or therapeutic help than to ignore his problems.

### Summary

Individualized teaching or directed teaching has been found necessary if the child is functioning significantly below the average class level or his own expected level of functioning. Critics of remediation have found little difference in results in spite of remedial help; they say only the children with higher intelligence benefitted, and that effects were short term. Other anti-remedial teachers, felt that psycho-therapy, particularly Rogerian therapy, was more beneficial than remedial lessons.

The importance of the teacher is not to be underestimated. It may be the teacher who partly caused the learning problem initially, or it may be entirely due to the warm, nurturing attitude of the teacher that the child improves (see 9.6).

Many theorists believe that taking the child out of the school situation is necessary so that he can gain a new picture of his worth, change his attitude to his work, learn through new approaches, re-learn the groundwork, learn new skills and gain the auditory and perceptual training he may have missed due to developmental lag or missed learning.

There are certain bonus affects on the child given one-to-one help. Amongst these are the 'halo-effect' and the 'Hawthorne Effect', the new family attitudes displayed, and the opportunity of being able to read.

## CHAPTER 3

### 3. WHAT SHOULD REMEDIATION METHODS INCLUDE?

*Tuning-in to the emotional needs of the child on the day of the lesson is the first requirement of the remedial teacher.* There are certain basic requirements in remediation that any method has to be flexible enough to include. Since, as Lawrence found (Widlake, 1971:92), that the only positive results proved from remediation have been a change in personality through Rogerian type counselling the best aspect of a structured method is that it can, if necessary, be covered by the child at home or on a tape recorder, and the one-to-one time together with the child can be spent in listening to any problems or delights that the child has to share. On the other hand, many children are too tired or depressed to talk, and by relaxing in the formal aspects of the method they can unwind and through the Poetry Method, can change their mood through the dramatization of the poems or from the excitement of reward and the positive feeling that can be gained by doing correct work for a half-hour or an hour.

*A remedial method must be flexible enough to allow for a full ongoing diagnosis of the child.* It must deal with the specific parameters of his needs. It may be necessary to add an extra perceptual programme for those with visual problems, a handwriting programme for those with motor problems, personal writing, study programmes or help with schoolwork. According to Holland 1960 (in Hilgarde and Bower, 1966;568), a "method" follows the plan of programmed learning with its reinforcement and should adhere to six topics:

### 3.1 The Plan of a "Method" as for Programmed Learning (Holland, 1960)

1. Immediate reinforcement
2. Emitted behaviour
3. Gradual progression to complex repertoires
4. Fading: gradual withdrawal of stimulus support
5. Controlling attentive behaviour
6. Discrimination training (abstractions - concepts)

#### 3.1.1 Immediate reinforcement

Reward, both intrinsic and extrinsic is very much part of the Poetry Method (see Chapter 9).

#### 3.1.2 Emitted behaviour

By the use of poetry for oral reading we are requiring from the child a certain amount of (emitted) "acting out" behaviour. The child can be taught that poetry is an important part of *literature* and the *arts* (The French Poet Paul Valery in Britten, 1970;178).

One has to read poetry so that:

The lines contain not only the sense but the very state of the person who is saying them. One must not only share the story with the audience but also the joy with which such a story can be told: to share and celebrate for a few brief moments all that is human in our loving, living and dying.

(Ben Kinsley, the Shakespearean poet on reading poetry [Mattieson, 1980])

**3.1.3 Gradual progression to complex repertoires**

The Poetry Method starts with the simplest of phonemes and patterns of phonemes. Following the linguistic emphasis, the letters are sounded not alone, but within the context of other letters of the word - from the word lists and then within the syntactical form giving the full meaning of each word due to its placement in the sentence Lefevre (in Dechant and Smith, 1977;228). Each lesson is graded, raising the difficulty of the new phoneme presented and the dictation and reading, until by the fortieth lesson the child should prove to be fully literate.

**3.1.4 Fading: gradual withdrawal of stimulus support**

The two stimulus supports in the Poetry Method are the teacher and the reward system. The teacher, in the beginning of the programme is nurturing, encouraging and rewarding (see 9.6). Initially, the material rewards are showered on the child. Gradually less fuss is made of these - but there is no lessening of motivation. By about twenty lessons, the child is so much in the habit of doing his home preparation for the next week's lesson that given the following week's programme, he will automatically do the preparation for the next lesson even if there has been no time to mark his work because of devoting the lesson time to listening to him talk, or to dramatizing the poetry or a radio play.

**3.1.5 Controlling attentive behaviour**

Because this programme changes in format every five to ten minutes and because the teacher is right there with a watchful eye, rewarding

and remarking on every reaction of the child, attention is at a premium and even the most hyperactive child concentrates when the Poetry Method is used. The format, in a lesson time of 45 minutes, is usually something like the following:

5	minutes:	Questions on the book read at home
5	minutes:	Those phonic pages prepared at home are marked
10	minutes:	Spelling and dictation on the words learnt is written down
10	minutes:	Poems prepared at home are read and/or recorded
2,5	minutes:	New sound/s introduced in spelling words from lists
2,5	minutes:	New sound/s introduced in phonics workbook - instructions gone over together
5	minutes:	New sound/s introduced within poetry - either the teacher models the fashion she would like it read or the poem is sight-read by the child (see Oral Reading, 7.1.3)
5	minutes:	The book to be read at home is <i>previewed</i> to motivate the child and familiarize him with the book's contents.
45	minutes	Total

### 3.1.6 Discrimination training (abstractions/concepts)

The approach used in the Poetry Method is the Psycholinguistic approach (Bloomfield, 1961; Fries, 1962; Kavangah, 1968; Kavangah & Mattingly, 1972; Lefevre & Goodman in Zintz, 1975; Eisenson & Ogilvy, 1979). A basic tenet of this approach is that language cannot be received or expressed without *meaningful content to that person*. In the Poetry Method, besides the time spent on the teaching of the phonology and morphology of language and syntax training the

semantics or the *understanding of the meanings* that language communicates is the most exciting part of using poetry.

The figures of speech, idiomatic expressions, antonyms, homonyms and synonyms; the suprasegmentals - stress, juncture and pitch of language are essential discrimination *abstractions* the child must learn because they change meaning in communication.

Poetry is full of semantic cues which is language at its highest level - that of abstractions or concepts.

### 3.2 Cognitive Theory Principles

In remediation, the principles of *cognitive theory* (Hilgard and Bower, 1966;563) have to be slowly and carefully presented.

3.2.1 The first of these is the "*perceptual features*" of the problem. This shows the learner the structure of the problem he is tackling. It indicates what-leads-to-what. In the Poetry Method he will see that the task is to cover a certain number of phonic combinations leading on to more complex spelling rules and grammar together with the poetry.

3.2.2 The "*organization of knowledge*" from simplified wholes to more complex wholes is built into the week by week growth of the programme. The child (and parent, if necessary) can be shown how the programme is so structured that the child is led on to faster and

more complicated reading and from the most simple elements of spelling to syllabication, prefixes and suffixes.

- 3.2.3** The third principle of "*learning with understanding*" is intrinsic to the power of poetry as will be discussed in Chapter 6.
- 3.2.4** "*Cognitive feedback*" which is the equivalent of reinforcement in S-R theory in a remedial method, has to be built into every step. It is necessary to confirm what the child already knows and is able to get correct. By observing his mistakes, one can immediately delve into their cause and remediate accordingly. For example, if the child is spelling 'hopping' correctly, but later writes 'skipping' on the same page, the teacher can grasp that moment in time to revise the "double consonant before the ending after a short vowel rule" - not necessarily by learning the rule, but by correcting examples in poems, or phonics work pages, etc.
- 3.2.5** "*Goal setting*", another of the cognitive theory principles, must also be built into the method. In the Poetry Method the child aims at reading a poem with sufficient expression and fluency to be recorded for the 'ultimate tape' - a tape recording of the best readers. He also tries to improve his spelling profile (Chapter 8).
- 3.2.6** "*Divergent thinking*", the sixth principle of cognitive theory, is the use of the creativity of the child alongside the method. In the Poetry Method this is done by the child making up his own verse, or substituting lines of verse within the well-known poems. Sometimes the theme of a poem is taken and the child tells a story which the

teacher types on a typewriter - as he is telling it, for him to re-read.

TABLE 1 - BELKIN'S COMPARISON OF TEACHING METHODS

	Directs Attention	Promotes Motivation	Maintains Interest	Provides Immediate Feedback	Allows Student to progress at his own rate	Avoids Excessive Frustration and failure	Promotes Transfer	Develops Positive Attitudes
Discussion	Usually	Usually	Usually	Yes	Usually	Usually	Can with a little effort	Usually
Programmed Instruction	Almost always	Does at least in beginning	Depends on material	Yes	Yes	Usually	Usually does not not	Uncertain
Recitation or drill	Always	Rarely	Rarely	Yes when oral, no when written	Usually (Yes in remedial situation)	Rarely	Rarely, if ever	Rarely, if ever

### **3.3 Belkin's Comparison of Seven Teaching Methods**

Belkin (1977) compares seven teaching methods: discussion, games, lectures, programmed instruction, projects, recitation and stimulation.

The Poetry Method could be said to include elements of DISCUSSION, PROGRAMMED INSTRUCTION, RECITATION AND DRILL. Belkin (1977) presents his results in Table 1 - Belkin's Comparison of Teaching Methods (p. 28 of this thesis).

From the table it can be seen that all the desired aspects of remediation are built up: attention, motivation, interest, immediate feedback, progress at the child's own rate and avoidance of frustration which help to create positive attitudes. Transfer of learning can only be seen on school report marks and from discussion of the child's progress with the class teacher. Most children have improved sufficiently (on re-testing) to leave after six to twelve months of private remedial help, and this is generally affirmed by the class teacher.

Johnson and Myklebust in their 1967 book, *Learning Disabilities: Educational Principles and Practices*, briefly present (pp. 57-9) the fundamental principles for the remediation of psychoneurological learning disorders. These considerations and how the Poetry Method incorporates them are as follows:

### **3.4 Remediation According to Johnson & Myklebust (1967)**

#### **3.4.1 Teaching must be individualized**

The Poetry Method is a method that can become the *child's method*. All the time the teacher must be aware of the specific deficits of the

child, his best abilities and his levels of language functioning in reading, written and spoken language. Extra time can be taken if a particular poem inspires questions or a line of teaching that is particularly needed by that child. The Poetry Method remains the structure around which any amount of variations can take place. The student teachers have chosen their own favourite poems, phonic pages, extra auditory rhymes or rhythm poems, etc.

**3.4.2 Teaching according to readiness in a balanced programme is essential**

The Poetry Method for beginners is structured on to the amount of "readiness" in each of the parameters of learning - visual, auditory, gross and fine motor, number, language, dominance, and tactile ability. If the child has areas of deficiency when tested, he follows specific training in those areas before commencing the Poetry Method or alongside it.

**3.4.3 Teaching must be as close to the level of involvement as possible**

Myklebust and Johnson (1967;58) suggest here that it is most important that the level of experience of each child be understood. The lowest level of involvement - whether it is perception, imagery, symbolization or conceptualization should be discovered so as not to waste time on over-simplification or over-generalization. The pleasure about using poetry is that it can be perceived on different levels. Because it evokes experiences and images peculiar to each listener (or reader) and because it includes metaphors and symbolic speech in its form, it can be understood at an intuitive non-verbal level, the remedial teacher can quickly learn from the child in no time at which level he functions, and as he progresses through the

programme so will higher meanings evolve. This is one of the reasons that it is suggested that the Poetry Method be used on those children with an average or above IQ, since poetry can inform on so many more levels than just the concrete level. Words themselves have two levels of meanings according to Ted Hughes (1967), first as they relate to the sounds of speech, then to the images, signs and experiences that they evoke.

#### 3.4.4 Teach to the type of involvement

Once the teacher has discovered the level of involvement of the child through diagnosis and testing she can decide whether it is a problem of *intrasensory* (specific parameter) or *intersensory* (involving all parameters) learning and whether there are deficiencies in integration (Myklebust and Johnson, 1967:59). In the Poetry Method the type of involvement is not isolated, but the method continues in similar form week after week and the teacher pinpoints onto the child's type of involvement. For example, if the problem is one of auditory discrimination each lesson the remedial teacher will get the child to *sound* out the spelling as he writes it, *compare* the new sound taught to similar and dissimilar sounds and search for the similar and rhyming words within the poems, etc.

#### 3.4.5 Consider that input precedes output as a basis for classification or grouping

According to Myklebust and Johnson (1967), output or "expressed" speech problems are usually reflective of "input" or "receptive" speech problems. In the poetry method care is taken that the child has sufficient preview discussion and adequate vocabulary to enjoy and

More important than anything is the level of self-esteem gained from a positive, "correct" performance that can transfer to the on-going struggle in the deficit area (see 9.5).

**3.4.8 Teaching to the integrities is necessary but has limitations**

The Poetry Method uses the integrities to good advantage in the performance of the reading and acting of the poems. What the child can do well is emphasized as a reward and as a motivation for the drudgery aspect of learning the spellings and improving the areas of deficits. The integrity area cannot develop on its own and become functional out of all proportion, because it is not being trained alone in the Poetry Method.

**3.4.9 Do not assume the need for perceptual training**

Before 1967, the accent of remedial training had been along perceptual motor lines following the theories of Cratty, Kephart, Barsch, Frostig, Getman, etc. Johnson and Myklebust are of the opinion that perceptual training can be a waste of time, and although there is a supplementary perceptual programme offered with the Poetry Method the researcher tends to agree with Dr. Cummins, Head of the Ophthalmologist Association of South Africa, 1984. He says that children are not taught to read better by being given sit-ups, eye exercises, or shape copying. Perceptual problems are best trained by actual reading of letters, words and phrases. In the Poetry Method there are poems that train the eye movements because of the actual pattern of the written words. For example, *Sliding s-blends* Week 17 by M.C. Livingstone:

We can slide  
    down  
        the  
            hill

or  
    down  
        the  
            stairs

etc.

Eye movements may be trained by memorizing repeated phrases and pinpointing accentuated words, for example *This is the Key* (Anon) "th" sound, Week 13.

This is the key of the *kingdom*.

In that *kingdom* there is a *city*.

In that *city* there is a *town*.

In that *town* there is a *street....*

The eye jumps from side to side, picking up the main words, and together with this goes longer and stronger breath control. With the better readers this poem is used to see how fast and how far they can read on one breath.

**3.4.10 Control important variables such as attention, rate, proximity, and size as needed**

*Attention* is controlled by varying length of time spent on each section within the lesson, *rate* varies with each individual. Sometimes the child needs two weeks spent on a lesson. Several of the student teachers found this point in favour of the Poetry Method, i.e. that the rate of teaching and presentation can be varied. *On the other hand, it has been found time and time again that children with*

attention difficulties need to know what is expected of them (Cordell & Cannon, 1985:148). The repetitive aspect of the Poetry Method tends to reassure the child that nothing unexpected will occur from one week to the next. Proximity is an important aspect of the one-to-one situation. For the child, sitting close on the right hand side of the teacher is a new warm experience which may in itself lead to greater learning. The size of the written words of the poems vary and could affect learning to an extent. Some of the children like to read typed versions of the poems, others prefer large printed copies. None of the children like to read cursive writing. As can be seen, when the children write their own spelling it is done in large letters on especially ruled "head-tummy-tail" lines (see Week 2).

**3.4.11 Develop both the verbal and non-verbal areas of experience**

Because of the *sounds* of the words and their arrangement, rhymes, jingles and verse can be understood and appreciated non-verbally before they are understood. Many people have attested to the intuitive, non-verbal right brain type of stimulation acquired from poetry Bryant (in Shapiro, 1969); Tolkein (in Wade, 1982) and the poets Wordsworth, Coleridge, W.H. Auden and actor Ben Kingsley (see 6.3.2) all testify to the non-verbal messages obtained just by listening to poetry. Heaney (in Wade, 1982:191) writes of his experiences as a war child and how the non-verbal message of words is part of language development:

For me, listening to words on the radio such as:

"Hilversum, Leipzig, and Droitwich, strange words in the catechism; enforced poetry of prayer and sprung rhythm of the shipping forecast - Doggerbank, Fair Isle, Channel Light Vessel" fired the imagination and 'bedded the ear' with a linguistic hard core that could be built upon one day.

Myklebust and Johnson (1987;63) say that deficiencies in non-verbal learning entail *time concepts*, and *direction* with its related concepts such as "fastest, half-full, half-way, not quite so full, etc." There is a wealth of these kinds of concepts in poetry in children's poetry, e.g.:

*Halfway up the Stairs* (A.A. Milne)

Halfway up the stairs  
Is the stair where I sit.  
There is no other stair  
Quite like it....

Sequencing: the days of the week:

They that wash on Monday  
Have all the week to dry;  
They that wash on Tuesday  
Will hang it by and by.... (Week 13)

Johnson and Myklebust's last principle of remediation is:

**3.4.12 Guide the approach by both behavioural criteria and psychoneurological considerations**

The author's emphasis is that the educational approach is guided, not only by behavioural criteria, but also by the physical findings and

medical problems which demonstrate the status of the nervous system. The Poetry Method has been taught over the years to children with many indications of brain disfunction, but the researcher has tended to *ignore* the labelling of the neurologists, electroencephalographer and ophthalmologist and to treat the child as if he were totally well, wholly loveable, fresh and new. By regarding the child in this positive light one is not allowing into one's mind at any time the feeling that teaching the child is tiresome, a waste of time or an emotionally irritating experience. The Poetry Method is a behavioural approach. The theory of this approach (Hjelle & Ziegler, 1976), is to take a negative form of behaviour, and by use of positive forms of regard, plus intrinsic and extrinsic reward, shape and form in the child a new attitude to himself and towards his work. This is done when following behaviourist means (MacMillan, 1973:4) by arranging consequences to facilitate learning the appropriate behaviour and discarding the habits of inappropriate behaviour. Other psychological schools of thought seen to affect the one-to-one learning situation are mentioned in Chapter 9.

### **3.5 Myers and Hammill**

Myers and Hammill (1969;235) have also drawn up a *list of principles on which a remedial programme can be built*. They are as follows:

#### **3.5.1 Differentiate testing from teaching**

In the Poetry Method this is quite possible with the use of standardized tests used pre-programme and post-programme, at which stage

indications are that the child is ready to leave - i.e. as seen in school reports and class teacher approbation. Besides the administration of standardized devices, the child is diagnosed by the wary remedial teacher *every time* she listens to the child reading or marks his spelling and dictation and phonic workbook exercises. The Poetry Method is an ongoing testing situation wherein new strategies of instruction are planned from the difficulties observed.

**3.5.2 Train the deficient areas**

This is a point of disagreement with Myers and Hammill. In the Poetry Method the aim is to compensate for the deficits, by building up other strengths in reading, writing, spelling and phonic work. As pointed out (3.4.7), teaching to the deficit area alone or in isolation is limited teaching and difficult for the pupil to tolerate.

**3.5.3 Utilize areas of strength**

Because of the varying paths taken each lesson, when using the Poetry Method the teaching tasks usually pair strong and weak areas together so that the rewarding aspect of the behaviour overrides the struggle. For example, the child may have trouble reading, but loves to sing, so we will read-sing a nursery rhyme following the words as we do so. The child may be a poor speller but have a beautiful handwriting - so we may use a gold felt-tip pen to enhance his strengths.

**3.5.4 Use multisensory presentations appropriately**

This is one of the Poetry Method strengths. Because it has a similar structure to its form of presentation week after week, the imagi-

native remedial teacher can decide on her variations of sensory approaches:

- 3.5.4.1**      **Sight/Vision:** None of the poems presented are illustrated (see 6.6 for discussion on illustrations), but the teacher must vary the orthography and present colour through colour coding, underlining or ringing the sound for the week. The star chart system (see 9.3) is coloured-in each week, and the books given to read at home all have highly colourful illustrations. The phonic workbooks are illustrated, some of the children enjoy adding colour to these little pictures themselves, and the children are encouraged to creatively illustrate the poems of the Poetry Method themselves.
- 3.5.4.2**      **Sound/Hearing/Auditory:** Besides the sound of the teacher's voice giving instructions, during half to two-thirds of the lesson the child is actually hearing his own voice reading and possibly recording the poems, responding to content discussion and telling his news and talking about his feelings. Certain words are stressed and taken out of context for discussion.
- 3.5.4.3**      **Kinesthetic/Touch:** The child may stand up and move around the room to the rhythm of the poem, e.g. march to *Buckingham Palace* (A.A. Milne), 4/4 rhythm. He writes words learnt every lesson, each time using a different colour pen, and he marks out the sounds within a poem. At home he actually writes certain of the spelling words as practice, and writes the answers to four or five workbook pages. Another aspect to the "touch"

sense is that the teacher may guide his writing, point with him, hug him, or touch him by clasping his arm or hand in emphasis or enthusiasm.

### **3.5.5 Remediate prerequisite deficits first**

The Poetry Method follows the principles of Myklebust and Johnson, 1967, and Kirk and Chalfant, 1984 when teaching reading. They are that there are certain teaching patterns followed, such as teaching the *receptive processes* before the *expressive* and revising the lower level processes before the higher ones. Before reading the poems some children may need to listen to some rhymes and jingles to learn how to listen to the novel lilt and tune of poetry. This is why "extra poems" may be added to some weeks of the Poetry Method. They may need to clap, or march or tap the rhythm while listening to it as the poem is read by the teacher. They could discuss the idea given by the title and work out a preview of the content before they are able to read it. The programme is so written that the easier sound combinations are taught first, i.e. short before long vowels, before irregular vowels, but can also be switched around. For instance a couple of students found their better reading pupils with auditory problems discriminating between short vowel a and e (weeks four and five) learned quicker when they were first introduced to the long vowels a-e\*, e-e\*, i-e\*, etc. (weeks 22 to 25).

### **3.5.6 Make provisions for utilizing feedback**

Feedback is of several types in the Poetry Method. The task itself is discussed with the child - be it spelling, or reading or writing and the child's performance is the continual feedback, i.e. his performance

during the lesson and at home. The homework is a useful ground feedback, e.g. when the child has learnt the spelling by seeing it and hearing it, it is called out to him and he sounds it out aloud - saying it while he writes it, he then corrects it with his mother, and writes down the correction - further feedback comes in the one-to-one session, when after writing the words and sentences the teacher rewards him, or he writes down any remaining errors in his Alphabetical Dictionary.

### **3.5.7 Develop abilities functionally**

This is easier to do with the older pupils who are taught study methods close to exam time, and grammar and comprehension exam techniques. The children in this particular study are beginner readers, so the priority is to teach them reading. Gradually as they have been taught the skill that they have the most immediate need to learn, i.e. the alphabet, the short vowels, digraphs and blends, so will they be able to perform according to the functional level of the rest of the class.

### **3.5.8 Start remedial programmes early**

Ideally this programme is designed for the child who enters the second year of school as a non-reader. It can be used on Grade 1 children and has been used to excellent effect on a retarded 24 year-old and an illiterate coloured woman of 57, but its content is geared at the young child and the earlier one remediates a learning problem the better.

**3.5.9 Individualize instruction**

The two main needs for individualized teaching are the uniqueness of the child and his problem, and the opportunity for an existentialist type relationship to build up in the therapeutic climate of the one-to-one relationship (Martin Buber, 1958; Carl Rogers in Hjelle & Ziegler, 1976; and Brammer & Shostrum, 1977). See 9.4.

**3.6 Briggs' Learning Outcome and Type of Guidance Required**

Briggs (1977:37) summarizes specific forms of provision of learning guidance that remedial teachers should use for the various sort of learning outcomes required.

Amongst them are the following:

Type of Learning Outcome

Form of Guidance to Learning

Discrimination

POINT TO DISTINCTIVE FEATURES OF OBJECTS TO BE DISCRIMINATED

In the Poetry Method: the distinctive features of the phoneme for the week is colour-coded (perceptual parameter). The sound's correct articulation is taught and it is compared to others (auditory parameter).

Concrete Concepts

GIVES CUES TO IDENTIFYING ATTRIBUTES

Defined Concepts

PRESENT COMPONENT CONCEPTS IN PROPER SEQUENCE

In the Poetry Method both of the above is taken into cognisance. Each week the sound taught and its particular attributes are presented in step by step sequence, e.g.

**TABLE 2: Briggs's Matching Conditions of Learning to Instructional Events and Types of Learning**

TABLE 2 BRIGGS

TYPES OF LEARNING

Instructional Events	INTELLECTUAL SKILLS			
	Discriminations	Concrete Concepts	Defined Concepts	Rules
1. Gaining Attention	Provide verbal directions, gestures, etc., to direct attention to object or characteristic that is to become the stimulus suitable to the learner. (2)			Set apart verbal statement of the rule from verbal directions that focus attention. (2)
2. Informing Learner of the Objective	Inform learner of objective to be able to distinguish each member of a set. (*)	Inform learner of objective to be able to put things into a class and respond to the class as a whole. (*)	Provide a verbal statement of the general nature of the performance to be expected. (2)	Provide a statement of the general nature of the performance to be expected. (2)
3. Stimulating Recall of Prerequisites	Stimulate recall of individual S-R connections by verbal instructions. (1)	Stimulate recall of discriminations and relevant qualities by verbal instructions. (1, 2)	Verbally stimulate recall of component concepts including relational concepts. (1)	Stimulate recall of component concepts including relational concepts and subordinate rules by verbal instructions. (2)
4. Presenting the Stimulus Material	Present distinctive features maintaining contiguity of stimulus and response. (1)	Present contiguous instances of the class and provide examples varying in non-relevant characteristics. (1, 2)	Present verbal definitions, examples, and demonstrations. (1)	Present a variety of examples through verbal stimuli. (2)
5. Providing Learning Guidance	Provide verbal cues to establish proper sequence of connections or to increase distinctiveness of stimuli. (2)	Provide a set of verbal instructions as cues to identifying attributes. (1)	Provide verbal cues to stimulate formation of component concepts contiguously in a proper sequence. (2)	Provide varying amounts of verbal cues contiguous with recall of component concepts that will lead learner to put rule together. (1)
6. Eliciting the Performance	Ask learner to discriminate distinctive features. (*)	Ask learner to respond to a set of stimuli as a class by observation. (*)	Ask learner to demonstrate the concept. (1)	Ask the learner to demonstrate the rule by stating it verbally and applying it. (1)
7. Providing Feedback	Provide differential reinforcement for correct and incorrect responses. (1)	Provide immediate confirmation of correct response to new set of stimuli. (2)	Provide confirmation of correct use of the definition. (*)	Provide confirmation of correct rule application. (2)
8. Assessing Performance	After each correct response to an instance repeat distinctive features by omitting elements responded to correctly. (*)	Learner correctly identifies concept instances. (1)	Learner demonstrates concept by using definition to classify. (1)	Learner demonstrates rule application. (1)
9. Enhancing Retention and Transfer	Provide contrast practice using correct and incorrect stimuli and repeat the situations to reduce interference. (2)	Broaden context of examples by providing variety of stimuli differing in appearance but belonging to a single class. (2)	Provide systematic spaced reviews to include variety of situations. (1)	Provide systematic spaced reviews to include broad range of rule applications. (1)

\* Derived from experience of the author.

1 Derived from *Principles of Instructional Design*, Gagné and Briggs

2 Derived from *Conditions of Learning*, Gagné

3 Derived from *Essentials of Human Learning*, Gagné

1. The sound it makes
2. How it is articulated
3. How it looks within the word, i.e. spelling
4. Listen to the word in a phrase
5. Look at the word in the phrase, i.e line of poetry
6. Say, see and listen to own voice reading phrase within context.

Rules

SHOW HOW COMPONENT CONCEPTS MAKE UP THE RULE

Learning to spell encompasses a good deal of rule learning. If the child has followed the above component concepts for the combination "ea" says "e" as in "head", by the time he gets to the sixth step he will realize that it is not pronounced as "ea" in "cream". This sequential guidance allows the teacher to:

Problem solving

PROVIDE MINIMUM CUES NEEDED TO LEAD LEARNER TO SELECT AND APPLY APPLICABLE RULES

Attitudes

ESTABLISH RESPECT FOR HUMAN MODEL: SHOW HIS BEHAVIOUR AND HOW HE IS REINFORCED

All this is very much part of the Poetry Method. Again and again the student teachers are told and shown that the relationship in a remedial situation is of prime importance, all else must follow.

Organized knowledge

PROVIDE PROMPTING IN CONTEXT OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK

If, when spelling or reading the child forgets the phoneme needed he is referred to a poem containing that sound or turns back to the spelling or phonics containing that particular sound reminding him of it

within the framework of meaning and order in which it was originally learnt.

### **3.7 Instructional Events of Briggs**

Among the instructional events that build up the types of learning above are the following (Briggs, 1977:86):

#### **3.7.1 Gaining attention**

In the Poetry Method the teacher is expected to be attentive and lively, aware of the child's every thought, and predicting waning of attention, which is regained by changing voice pitch, gestures, highlighting what is being taught by taking it out of context and repeating it, or writing it or illustrating it pictorially.

#### **3.7.2 Informing learner of the objective**

The child is made aware each week that we are building up a hierarchy of sounds and that he has to see its place in its class and set. Besides this, the sort of performance expected from him is provided in a verbal statement, e.g. "You will try and make me feel all scared and set a creepy atmosphere when you read this poem."

#### **3.7.3 Stimulating recall of prerequisites**

Recall of the discrimination, concrete concepts and defined concepts and rules is done through verbal instruction.

**3.7.4 Presenting the stimulus material**

**3.7.5 Providing learning guidance**

**3.7.6 Eliciting the performance**

As has been shown, at first the remedial teacher provides a set of verbal instructions and even written explanations in the phonics book and in the child's file, then the pupil has to demonstrate the concepts taught by verbally applying them to his reading, or writing them in his spelling and dictation.

**3.7.7 Providing feedback**

If something is correct the child is rewarded with a tick in the book and an enthusiastic remark or gesture, but when it is wrong the child is taught to learn through his mistake and it is corrected without any issue and marked with a "C" for correction - no crosses are used, and red pen is never used - only various coloured Koki pens. Immediate confirmation of correct work is always given following the ideas of Briggs and Gagné (1977).

**3.7.8 Assessing performance**

Assessing the child's performance week by week makes up the bulk of the work of the teacher in the Poetry Method.

**3.7.9 Enhancing retention and transfer**

This is best done using reading, spelling and poems actually being taught in the child's classroom. Gradually the child will broaden his reading from poetry to machine reading, newspapers, magazines,

comics and further books. About every fifth to tenth week of the programme the rules taught are reviewed.

### **Summary**

In this chapter we have looked at ideas of what an ideal remedial method should include according to certain theorists and the types of learning outcome required from a remedial situation. The poetry method appears to suit the theoretical models of method and learning in its sequence and format.

In Chapter 4 it will be seen what other remedial methods include in their programmes and how the Poetry Method resembles or differs from them.

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CHAPTER 4

4 OTHER REMEDIAL METHODS USED

According to Berliner and Gage (in Gagné et al, 1965;5), the term "*teaching method*" is not applied to a teaching process or technique such as phonic drill, but rather:

Teaching methods are recurrent instructional processes, applicable to various subject matters, and usable by more than one teacher.\* They are *recurrent* in that the activities are repeated over intervals measured in minutes or weeks. They are *instructional processes* such as patterned teacher behaviour .... e.g. discussion, delivery systems for curriculum .... e.g. a programme of instruction and organizational structures for promoting learning e.g. tutoring....

\* That the teaching method should be *usable by more than one teacher* means that it should not depend upon the talents, traits or resources unique to an individual teacher.

In this chapter various remedial methods will be mentioned and the techniques or instructional processes used in the Poetry Method will be examined with reasoning for their inclusion.

Dechant and Smith (1977) have divided the various approaches to remediation into those that emphasize the *method* - that which the *teacher* does, i.e. the Stimulus Approach, and those which emphasize the capacities, potentials and behaviour of the *pupil*, i.e. the Mediatlional Approach.

#### 4.1 The Stimulus Approaches

The stimulus approaches include those in which the alphabet is changed, making it more consistent. The new printed symbols change word forms ideally improving early learning and making it easier. These methods are the Initial Teaching Alphabet (i.t.a.), Diacritical Marking System, Words in Colour (Gattegno, 1969) and UNIFON. Other stimulus approaches include the linguistic approaches, programmed learning models, the Language-Experience Approach (Allen & Allen, 1966) and the Text Film Reading Programme, or any of the machine reading or controlled reader programmes (I/CT, 1982).

#### 4.2 The Medical Model - Mediational Approaches

The Mediational Approach emphasizes the neurological, physiological and chemical changes that accompany reading. This approach looks at internal events of the learner, and points out that reading failure is due, not to bad teaching methods, but to a limitation of the learner to absorb the material presented. The Poetry Method includes both *stimulus* and *mediational* approaches, as will be seen when various teaching methods have been compared to the Poetry Method.

The Mediational Approaches follow the Medical Model. This model states that incorrect or abnormal learning is seen as a symptom of some underlying problem which has to be solved first, or cured before learning can take place.

TABLE 3 (Bush & Giles, 1977; 119) TYPES OF LEARNING DISABILITY AND ASSOCIATED REMEDIATION SYSTEM  
(An overview of specialised methods)

Perceptual-Motor Motor // + Perceptual //	Spoken Language +	Reading +	Written Language Spelling +	Handwriting //	Arithmetic
Delacato Cratty (Cratty) Kephart * Kephart* (Barsch)* Barsch* (Frostig) Frostig Getman* Cruickshank Kirk-Kirk * Bush-Giles * Hartman Minskoff-Wise- man-Minskoff * Barry  Johnson- Myklebust * Lehtinen *	Kirk-Kirk * Bush-Giles * Hartman Minskoff-Wise- man-Minskoff * Barry McGinnis Gray-Ryan Johnson- Myklebust *	Hegge-Kirk-Kirk  Fernald * Johnson- Myklebust * Lehtinen * (Fitzgerald) (Pugh) Gillingham- Stillman*	(Fernald)  Gillingham- Stillman*	Myklebust Lehtinen *	(Fernald) Johnson- Myklebust Lehtinen
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px; width: fit-content; margin: auto;"> <p>Key * These mentioned in Chapter 4 The POETRY METHOD covers these + and the POETRY METHOD covers these subjects specifically //incidentally. ( ) Secondary area of interest.</p> </div>					

TABLE 3

From Table 3 (p. 50) an overview of the methods used in remediation following the Medical Model can be seen. A few of these will be examined. The ideas of Kephart, Getman, Cratty, Barsch and Jean Ayres all state that before any reading or spelling or language training or other higher level mental processes can take place the more basic processes in the hierarchy of learning must be fully developed first. The methodology of each of these men varies considerably.

#### 4.2.1 Kephart

Kephart (1971) believes it is so difficult to teach the child whose development is incomplete or interrupted because he is forced into stages that he cannot handle adequately. According to Kephart the motor bases to learning are: "posture, laterality, directionality and body image". Once these four are developed the child can begin meaningful explorations of his environment for which the child needs "adequate: balance and posture, locomotion or ability to move about, contact or the ability to grasp and release, and receipt and propulsion" - catching and throwing or pushing.

Kephart and Roach (1966) developed the *Purdue Perceptual-Motor Survey* and after administering this would draw up individual programmes for children they "surveyed" (rather than "tested"). The survey includes: balance and posture, body image and differential perceptual-motor match, ocular control and form perception. Although he also used the *Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities* Goodman, 1973 (in Goodman, 1973) and the *Whelpman Test of Auditory Discrimination* (1958) which gave a large amount of auditory information, he did not include auditory training in his programme.

#### 4.2.2 Doman and Delacato

Doman and Delacato (1965) have analysed the training needs at every age so finely that they can draw up a prognosis of behaviour and learning ability for every form of gross motor and visual behaviour that is not seen in any particular child at the expected level of development. Their clinic in Philadelphia - the Institute of Human Potential, is specifically for those children of normal and below normal IQ requiring specific gross and fine motor and visual-motor remediation.

#### 4.2.3 Dr Raymond Barsch

Dr Barsch (Ayres, 1981) is the originator of the theory of Movigenics which states that through movement efficiency the sensitivity system (all the senses) pass stimuli along to the brain. These messages are sent under a climate of "necessary stress" as opposed to "adverse stress" and the symbolic communication of this movement efficiency is language. Remediation centres on the exercising of the six "percepto-cognitive modes": gustatory, olfactory, tactual, kinesthetic, auditory and visual, plus much training in muscular movement relationships. The pinnacle of his hierarchy is the visual mode, and again there is no mention of the three R's at all in this perceptual-motor theory.

#### 4.2.4 Jean Ayres

Occupational therapists have, over the years, adapted their therapy for motor and behaviour handicaps to help those children with problems of poor integration of sensations from the vestibular system

and the body that has - according to Jean Ayres (1981) been the basis for some of the auditory and most of the visual problems. Ayres believes that full body movements on such apparatus as the scooter board, the swimming bolster and the huge body ball, and the sensory input and organization that goes along with these movements builds a foundation for the cerebral processes used in reading and spelling. The time period of the therapy is about two and a half hours a week and a typical case study of Bob (Ayres 1981;155) shows that with only vestibular and motor stimulation Bob's reading improved more than three years and his spelling one and a half years. The behaviour of interest in the Poetry Method is the *reading and spelling*. If it is found in the initial teaching that the child needs further *gross motor work* or his co-ordination is so poor that it affects his *fine motor* co-ordination in written work then he is sent to occupational therapists for specialist time-consuming training, alongside of continuing the Poetry Method.

#### 4.2.5 Gerald Getman's remediation instructions

Gerald Getman, in his book *How to Develop Your Child's Intelligence* (1965), shows that he is primarily interested in visual perception, which he said could be trained through the overlapping stages of: general motor patterns, special movement patterns, eye movement patterns; visual language patterns in which he emphasizes control of the various speech muscles so that oral language will take over gesturing, and visualization patterns or visual memory. Getman drew up a visuo-motor model which is a pyramid of skills each dependent on that of a lower level. In his book *Developing Learning Readiness*

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(Getman et. al, 1966), Getman drew up clear remediation instructions under the headings:

1. Practice in General Co-ordination
2. Practice in Balance (walking beam)
3. Practice in Eye-Hand Co-ordination (chalkboard)
4. Practice in Eye Movement
5. Practice in Form Recognition (special templates)
6. Practice in Visual Memory (tachistoscope programmes).

Additional workbooks and filmstrips for shape-training are part of the programme - no auditory or language training is given.

The following are the ways the Poetry Method includes similar remediation to that of the Getman programme but as part of the total language experience:

**4.2.5.1**            **General co-ordination and**

**4.2.5.2**            **Balance** (1. and 2. above) can be taught by moving and acting out a poem. For example *Listen to the Band* (Week 4, Book 1):

Clap your hands  
And tap your feet,  
You can dance  
To the pop band beat...

or an extension of above for better readers (Week 4, Book 1):

Clap-clap hands  
Tap-tap toes,  
Trip to the beat  
As the trumpet blows.

Chorus: Ramma-dam dim-dam,  
Yatta-tat tat,  
Boom-aboom, dim-bam,  
Chitta chat-chat.

**4.2.5.3**      **Eye-hand co-ordination** is taught in the writing of words each week.

**4.2.5.4**      **Eye movement exercises** are included as part of the poem as mentioned on p. 34.

**4.2.5.5**      **Form recognition** is not taught from shapes but from the "word" itself. Each week the new sound is colour-coded. The aim is that the child will be able to remember this "form" when he sees it several weeks later no longer colour coded or emphasized in colour without the other clues of the spelling lists and phonic pages. Visual memory is tested through the weekly written spelling, and also through questions on memory for the images mentioned in a poem of a previous week. Getman includes no auditory or language training, which is a major part of the Poetry Method.

**4.2.6**      **Myklebust and Johnson**

As can be seen in Table 3 (p. 50), Myklebust and Johnson (1967) have ideas for the remediation of reading, written language and arithmetic disorders. Their point of view is that learning is a psychoneurological event and remediation may be needed at input, integration or output level. Because their interest covers all the sense parameters of learning, they appreciate that those with visual dyslexia who

cannot hold a picture of a word in their mind need a phonic approach to reading, whereas an auditory dyslexic is unable to analyze and synthesize phonetically and will need another approach. Although they do not give a systematic programme of lessons, they suggest remediation ideas for every area of difficulty.

From Table 2 it can be seen that Fernald and Gillingham-Stillman also have ideas for remediation of reading written language and arithmetic. They are the best known exponents of the original VAKT approaches. It was felt that beside training through the usual visual (V) and auditory (A) systems when the senses of movement (kinesthetic) (K) and touch (T) were added, it seemed to help the child retain and retrieve information (Otto et. al 1974;323).

#### 4.2.7 Fernald

Sometimes the Fernald (1943) remedial method (ibid.;323) is called the "kinesthetic method" because not only did the authoress bring in the use of tracing and cursive writing of the words chosen by the child, but she also used sand or salt boxes to help promote learning through tactile reinforcement.

- \* First the child chooses the word that he wants to learn
- \* It is written in large cursive letters (at least half an inch tall).
- \* The teacher acts as the model by pronouncing the word syllable by syllable while tracing the word with her finger.
- \* The student imitates this.
- \* When the pupil is ready the word is covered over and he must write and say it by memory.

- \* Gradually a set of words is built up and phrases, sentences and paragraphs grow.

This method is very slow and it takes over two years of five sessions a week for the child to learn to read from it. Some teachers develop onto the use of the Language Experience Approach in its later stages (Myers & Hammill 1969, Otto 1974, Bader 1980). The successes of this method may be due to the active manipulative behaviour of the child making the words with his own hand instead of through passive assimilation, and this is why each week through the tracing and writing of the word he learns the order and arrangement of letters and phonetic units in the word. The latter is seen in the weekly written spelling and dictation done in the Poetry Method, when, beside *writing* the words in large clear printing or cursive (if the child has passed Std 1 at school), uncluttered by words above or below because of the special ruling of the lines (see Week 2) the child also *sounds* out the letters or syllables to hear the *auditory* message as well. In the correction of the spelling - as in the Fernald method - the child looks at the correct word on his list and re-writes it above the incorrect one and in his alphabet book.

#### 4.2.8 Gillingham-Stillman

The sounding out of the words in the Poetry Method also follows the Gillingham-Stillman technique in which the visual-auditory-kinesthetic parameter is trained by the child's *hearing his own voice* and *feeling his own speech organs* working at producing the sound emphasising the kinesthetic element. The Gillingham approach emphasises the linguistic and graphic regularities of English and is called an alpha-

phonetic method (Logan et al, 1972). When training the visual-kinesthetic parameter (writing) in the Gillingham method, each letter is carefully explained - its form, orientation, starting point, direction of strokes, etc. This is also done in the Poetry Method. In the first weeks of the programme it will be seen how the handwriting is stressed. Correct formation of each printed letter is taught and neat well-formed letters are expected and rewarded each week. In the Gillingham-Stillman Method exceptions and irregularities such as b's and d's are taught *after regular words have been grasped*. In the *Poetry Method* these irregularities are taught alongside regular sounds, and special attention is given to them auditorally or perceptually if necessary. There are eight steps or 'linkages' in the Gillingham-Stillman method that teach the association of the visual, auditory and kinesthetic processes, and it can be seen that, besides the following steps, there is a great deal of drill in the Gillingham lesson aimed at strengthening the linkages between the various parameters. The Poetry Method does not drill so intensively - if it looks like the child has grasped the sounds taught the previous week on his weekly testing, the next sound is introduced without too much drill or over-teaching.

#### TEACHING THE LETTER "P"

##### Gillingham-Stillman Method

1. The name of the letter:  
"Pee = p, = pah (sound).

##### Poetry Method - Weeks 1 & 2

1. Only the "sound" (pah) is taught from the pictograph of a pipe (Week 1).

2. Teacher writes "p", explains it goes straight up and around. Pupil traces it, copies it and writes it from memory. Teacher directs writing movements.
3. The pupil associates the look and feel of the letter, and learns to form the symbol without looking at the paper as he writes.
4. The teacher says the phoneme. Child writes it.
5. Child is shown the letter and asked to sound it. Teacher moves child's hand to form letter. Child sounds it.
6. Teacher gives *name*, e.g. "Pee", child gives *sound*, "Pah".
7. No. 6 is reversed.
8. Again the letter is written - first to the sound, then to the name.
2. The teacher writes "p" on "head-tummy-tail" lines, showing how "p" has a tail. The child copies - no memory testing, just modelling. Teacher differentiates between capital "P" and small "p" in Week 2.
3. It is felt by the researcher that the child is not learning much by not looking as he writes the word, so instead he writes it (looking) in the air, on his hand, on his leg, or guesses between two or three letters as the teacher "writes" it on his back.
4. The teacher sounds out the letter and pupil writes it.
5. --
6. The "*names*" of the letters are not taught at all in the Poetry Method, only the sounds they make.
7. --
8. --

#### SPELLING REMEDIATION

##### ONCE THE CHILD KNOWS THE LETTERS AND SOME VOWELS

###### Gillingham-Stillman Method

1. Teacher says the word.
2. Pupil repeats the word.
3. Pupil *names* the letters, e.g. "bee are ee ay dee - bread".

###### Poetry Method

1. Teacher says the spelling word, gives a sentence containing the word and repeats the word.
2. Pupil repeats the word.
3. Pupil *sounds* the letters as he *writes*, e.g. "brr - e - dah - bread".

4. Pupil writes the word, naming (as above) each letter as he forms it.
5. Pupil reads back what he has written. Words only are given, in isolation.
4. The Poetry Method establishes better visual-auditory kinesthetic impressions as the sounds *sound* like the word when blended together.
5. Pupil reads back what he has written once he has completed a short *meaningful sentence*, so the word given is not given in isolation.

#### 4.2.9 The Lehtinen Approach

The Lehtinen Approach (see Table 3, page 50) was formed for the hyperactive child after the author had aimed her approach at the child with the "Strauss Syndrome" (Strauss and Lehtinen, 1947 [in Otto, et al, 1974]). Materials used when teaching reinforce the learning that takes place while using the method. Her materials include a good deal of motor activities: sorting, cutting, printing or writing, etc. When teaching reading she will use auditory discrimination, visual discrimination and writing to reinforce each other. The Poetry Method uses her ideas of colour-coding the letters and sounds to provide added clues to learning. An idea of hers which could well be implemented in the Poetry Method is the use of coloured stamps, used to stamp out words letter by letter to teach the structure of the word. The word is then written to reinforce the form of the word and make it easier to remember (Otto et. al 1974;324).

#### 4.2.10 The Hegge-Kirk-Kirk Method

The Hegge-Kirk-Kirk Method (Thorleif G. Hegge, Samuel A. Kirk and Winifred D. Kirk) is presented in their book *Remedial Reading Drills* (1965). It is a synthetic method (see 5.2) which teaches isolated

letter sounds. The student is taught to sound each word letter-by-letter, then blends the sounds together, says the word and finally writes the word pronouncing each *sound*, not letter name, as he writes (Bader 1980;93). These steps are exactly those used in the Poetry Method to teach spelling from Week 4 onwards. Drills (in the Hegge-Kirk-Kirk Method) include combinations of sound, e.g. -ink, -ang, -ound, -ill and advanced sounds, e.g. aw, ew, ly, ge(j), ought, etc. after presentation of short vowel sounds and long vowels with consonant combinations. Blending is thus:

d ee d	f ee d	r ate	p ine
b ee r	d ee r	c ape	t ape

Sentences are constructed using the words the pupil has learnt in his drills, e.g. "pat the fat cat....". Books are not presented until the child has worked through at least twenty drills, then the books contain what is called "mature content" using a good many phonemically regular words and (note) no illustrations.

The Hegge-Kirk-Kirk method and the Bush and Giles (1969) ideas for remediation correspond a great deal to the sub-tests of the Illinois Test of Psycholinguistic Abilities which gives a profile of children's performance of different psycholinguistic abilities and was conceived by Kirk and McCarthy in 1961. The ITPA is not a test of language but pinpoints "selected psychological and linguistic abilities that are assumed to be basic to academic achievement" (Myers and Hammill, 1969;223) such as grammatic closure (syntax), auditory reception and association (semantics), verbal expression (semantics, memory and closure, etc.). The profile of scores of the 12 sub-tests of the ITPA

is most important. The authors of the test (Kirk et al. 1968) say that

the identification of specific deficiencies in psychological functions leads to the crucial task of remediation directed to the specific areas of defective functioning. This is the *sine qua non* of diagnosis.

#### 4.2.11 Wilma Jo Bush and Marian Taylor Giles

Wilma Jo Bush and Marian Taylor Giles, in their 1969 manual *Aids to Psycholinguistic Teaching* present a full and varied programme training: auditory reception, visual reception, auditory association, verbal expression, manual expression, grammatic closure, auditory sequential memory, visual sequential memory, as well as perceptual motor activities, remedial recreation and multisensory techniques. All the above activities are a training of psycholinguistic processes for their own sake - not for later needs, as one would give body image training for later reading (Bush and Giles 1977;1). The authors' ideas are for classes ranging from kindergarten level ranging up to Grade 8 (Std VI). Many of the lessons include games, some of the ideas are a great deal of fun, e.g. To teach visual reception - or the understanding of symbols, one of the tasks is for 3rd Grade (Std 1) children to make "pictionaries", that is to find pictures that correspond to written words. Another, to teach visual association includes presenting the child with art blobs and the child must say what it looks like. Bush and Giles use rhymes and poetry in several of their examples, e.g.

Rhymes for auditory association (1977;68): "Find your nose, touch your .... (toes)".

Rhyming words (auditory closure) (ibid.;96): "tell the child to fill in the missing letter of the rhyming word:

1. A bag of toys is by my bed.

The ball I have is big and -ed."

Verbal expression (ibid.;275) to help with vocal encoding and motor development at the same time jump over a rope on the floor or swing around:

"Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, turn around

Teddy Bear, Teddy Bear, touch the ground...."

Although rhyme and poetry is suggested it is only a small part of their total programme.

#### 4.2.12 Psychoanalytic Approach

Others who follow the medical model are those who take the psychoanalytic approach - Rabinow (1964); Bettelheim (1981). Their view in essence is that it is some fixation at one of the Freudian phases of development - the oral, the anal or the phallic that is blocking learning, and this must be cleared before further work can proceed normally. Bettelheim and Zelan, in their book *On Learning to Read* (1981) enlarges on their idea that children do not like reading and cannot read because of the meaningless content of Basal readers (see *Boring Readers*, 6.2). They make mistakes in their reading and spelling because they have a fear of reading certain words because of events in their lives at that time or previously experienced. His three guiding principles when teaching reading are:

1. What may seem a mistake to the teacher has some subjective meaning on some level.
2. Making a mistake when reading indicates a conflict between the conscious attempt to read what is printed to his audience, and a subconscious need to "give to words a quite different response that his reading arouses in him" (Bettleheim & Zelan 1981;81), i.e. an attempt to "express, solve or escape the inner conflict" (ibid.).
3. Following an understanding of the above the teacher should treat mistakes sympathetically, or with "benign neglect", or showing an interest in the meaning the mistake holds for the child. The result of not concentrating on the error, but rather on the "meaning" is generally positive because the child begins to understand why he misread the word in the first place.

In the Poetry Method it is an interesting exercise for the remedial teacher to see that substitutions or reversals may be motivated by sub- or pre-conscious concerns, fears or wishes rather than explain them away automatically as aural or visual deficiencies. For example, is the child who continually reads "saw" for "was" unable to face the past because of early trauma? Is it necessary to explain the whole rule of: A single consonant in the word "tiger" makes it a long "i" when a child reads "tigger" for "tiger" each time? Or is it possible that the word "tiger" is too scary for the child to read? Treating mistakes in this way leads to a closer, warmer, far more empathetic manner of teaching than in mechanically analysing everything into VAKT categories.

### 4.3 Other Approaches

One of the most exciting approaches to reading using the actual speech of the child and writing it down for him to read is:

#### 4.3.1 The Language Experience Approach to Reading

The Language Experience approach followed on Dr. Allen's (1966;15) maxim that:-

What I think about I can talk about. What I  
say, I can write - or someone can write for me  
- what I can write, I can read - and others can  
read too.

Language, in this approach, is not the structured impersonal one of the linguists, rather, it is spoken about as the social, personal means for purposeful communication (Stauffer, 1970;21), and *experience* as the individual's unique conception of his world. *His* interests, *his* curiosities, *his* particular culture and how *he* personally adjusts and learns, form the content of reading material.

The Breakthrough to Literacy Method (MacKay 1971) follows the Language Experience Approach and places the child in control of the language he is using continuously for the use of his own reading and writing. According to Kerfoot (Zintz, 1975;210) the Language Approach has much in its favour in a group teaching situation: it encourages free and easy communication on subjects of interest to the child who provides his own ideas or adds to those presented by the "experience" offered by the teacher. It shows that reading is

talk written down, and through this he learns how to use punctuation marks, and to see how pitch, intonation and stress, work. It is creative and flexible and meaningful. However, although he has the opportunity to share ideas, it is on this very point that the method is not ideal in a one-to-one remedial situation.

The child who has a learning problem often has a dearth of ideas or vocabulary. In the group situation children learn to listen to the ideas of others. But in the tutoring situation the child may be stilted by his own controlled vocabulary. Because of the random use of interesting words he may not provide a grounding and continuity in phonics/ phonemic skills, and it would be difficult to measure his reading against others or on a standardized test. The approach does not offer thinking, or problem solving skills needed in comprehension, and as a remedial method offers insufficient drill and practice.

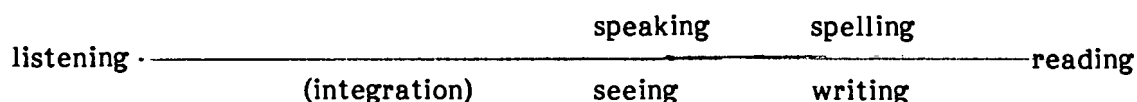
Aukerman (1971;16) says that the purpose of the Lang Experience Method of teaching the child to read via his own vocabulary is to lead him on to a variety of reading such as listening to *poems* and stories and expressing himself in pictures, words and sentences. Perhaps the Poetry Method would follow well as a remedial programme to a beginning reader exposed to LEA - as now the child can learn all the rules yet still continue to enjoy reading related to speech through the poetry.

#### 4.3.2 The Language Arts

Proponents of the Language Arts Approach say that linguistics-phonemics are not concerned with meaning or thinking, and feel that

1) listening, 2) speaking, 3) seeing the sound-symbol, 4) writing spelling, and 5) reading, should be integrated into a simultaneous and/or sequential process when dealing with language (Logan 1972;229). The fifth step - that of reading, they say, is a thinking and relating process and must involve the pupils in stories, *poems* and factual material that have relevancy to himself.

The interrelatedness of all the tasks of reading and writing of the Language Arts Approach is very obvious in the Poetry Method and it is possible that it slots neatly into this approach because of its multi-involvement in the listening-to-reading continuum:



The Poetry Method includes the following aspects of language:

listening

integration of words

speech - general discussion

speech - related to the poem

speech - the poem itself being read aloud, echoing or assisted by the teacher

seeing - the words, as he does, the letter

writing - the words for spelling

reading - the poem on his own.

### Conclusion

The Poetry Method appears to overlap with several of the VAKT and language remedial methods, and can be considered as an all-encompassing eclectic method.

### Summary

The remedial methods compared to the Poetry Method in this chapter include those of the stimulus and mediational approaches. The latter follow the Medical Model, giving the idea that there is something that must be cured (remediated) to clear the way for reading. Teaching and most remedial methods branch out of this model. Theories based on hierarchical learning with a gross-motor base (Kephart, Barsch) and the accent on sensory-motor integration (Ayres) are presented, as are those with a perceptual bias (Getman) and auditory/language bias (Myklebust & Johnson; Bush & Giles and Hegge, Kirk & Kirk). The VAKT methods of Fernald & Gillingham, Stillman, and Lehtinen; the Psychoanalytic Approach; the Language Experience and the Language Arts are all compared to the Poetry Method for analysis.

CHAPTER 5

METHODS

5 WHICH TEACHING PROCESS TO CHOOSE?

If we look at a typical weekly lesson from the Poetry Method and break it down into the teaching approaches, processes or techniques used, it looks as follows:

Questions on book read at home to elicit meaningful reading.

Reading for meaning psycholinguistic approach.

Phonic pages prepared at home marked.

Phonics from *Phonics is Fun* or *Phonics Workbook B, C or D* - linguistic orientation (Louis Krane 1970).

Spelling and dictation on the words learnt, written down.

Synthetic method - phonic.

Poems prepared at home, read or recorded.

Analytic method. Phrase and Sentence Method. Oral reading with accent on supra-segmentals.

New sound introduced in spelling words from lists.

Phonics (linguistic).

New sound introduced in phonics workbook - instructions gone over together.

Phonics - linguistic orientation words presented in meaningful sentences and situations.

New sound introduced within the words of the poem.

Impress reading, Echo Method, assisted reading, modelling or sight-reading. Look and Say.

The book to be read at home is previewed to motivate the child and familiarize him with its contents to aid meaning.

Psycholinguistic Approach.

It can be seen from the above that the Poetry Method is eclectic in its use of different reading techniques. It must be remembered that in the remedial

situation the approach to that of the classroom must change. In the classroom the beginning reading child may be learning to read purely by the Look-and-Say method through the Basal reading schemes of *Janet and John*, *Dick and Dora* or *Kathy and Mark* or through Phonics or through a mixture of the two, via the Language experience approach.

## **5.1 Analytic Methods**

### **5.1.1 Whole-Word method**

Controversy over the "correct" techniques of teaching reading has grown ever since Flesch demonstrated in his book *Why Johnny Can't Read* (1955) that Westerners were way behind Russians in early education because of their over-use of the "Look-and-Say" or "Whole-word" method of teaching beginning reading. This was a method introduced in Europe in 1648 and in the USA in 1828.

Look-and-Say follows one of the analytic methods of reading called so because it begins with the word, phrase or sentence, and then these larger units are then broken down into the parts - the phonics. Naming this method the "sight" or "configuration method" is not necessarily correct (Dechant and Smith, 1977;210) as various uses of the senses are used in teaching the Whole Words method.

**5.1.1.1 Critics of the whole-word method** say it is an incomplete approach. Amongst them are Bloomfield & Barnhart, 1961; Wardhaugh 1969; Otto et al, 1974; Bouren & Zintz, 1977; Bush & Giles, 1977; Bettelheim & Zelan, 1981.

Criticisms of the Whole-Word Method include the following:

- \* The child must be adept at visual discrimination (so that he will differentiate one word from another and notice similarities and differences).
- \* His visual memory has to be of an adequate level so that he can remember a word taught when meeting it again.
- \* Unless he has a sufficient degree of perceptual constancy he will not recognize the word written differently. So although normal children learn to read quickly by this process, visual dyslexics do not.
- \* There is a good deal of repetitive teaching and slow boring flash card drill in the teaching of new word after new word.
- \* The vocabulary is rigidly controlled and if the child is learning via Basal readers he will learn no more than a couple of hundred words continually repeated from the first three book levels (see 6.2.1).
- \* Most often the words are taught by relating them to a picture or in isolation by flashing the word or learning it through repetitive games.
- \* Daniels and Diack (1969) attack the Whole Word Method because letters and their role in word recognition is ignored, and they say it is virtually impossible to recognise a word by its shape. The child cannot be taught the thousands of words that compose his language as single units (Dechant and Smith 1977). According to Vernon (1971) the optimum rate for the beginner reader of normal intelligence is one new word per sixty old words. She

feels that is far better for the child to meet new words within context - which is the manner in the Poetry Method.

- \* John Money (1962) believes that the Whole-Word Method cannot be taught without the phonic aspect. He says that children adept in concept formation quite naturally work out their own concepts of phonetic rules even if they have not been taught them.
- \* Since it seems an unnecessary waste of time to teach by word shape alone, it seems obvious that a child needs to develop a system for attacking words that can be applied to other new words.

**5.1.1.2**      **The Poetry Method and whole words:** The Poetry Method makes use of the phrase and sentence manner of teaching and the teaching of specific words is done as follows:

**5.1.1.2.1**      **Service Words:** As from the assorted lists of useful words used most frequently by Gates (1926), Dolch (1942), Thorndike & Love (1944) (in McNally & Murray 1968). These may be *regular words* - sounded the way they are spelt, e.g. (from Week 7)

Dot's mom did *the* fox trot

Dot jigs *and* bobs to 'pop'...

or *irregular words* - words not spelt as sounded, so the child cannot rely on the sound/symbol relationship. Words such as: *door, such, oh come, what, you're, something, how*, for example (Week 6):

The door bell is ringing,  
It is *such* a din!  
"Oh, *come* along in!  
*What* is that you're bringing?  
*Something* that's hid  
Under its lid  
A dear little lamb!  
*How* lucky I am!

**5.1.1.2.2** High frequency content area words, i.e. words related to content or subject areas:

Movement words (Week 7) *Dot's mom*: jigs, bobs, looks, dance, run, hop.

Food (Week 10) *Mummy is Slimming*: butter, cake, coffee.

**5.1.1.2.3** High frequency words in instructional reading: abstract words (Durkin, 1972). These are words without any meaning which are never learnt in isolation in the Poetry Method. They are learnt within a phrase of meaning, e.g. *and, that there*, etc (Week 4):

Rat-a-tat-tat  
Dad opens *the* door  
*And there* sits the cat  
With a rat on *the* floor.

**5.1.1.2.4** Homographs words with the same spelling and different meanings - e.g. the word "bump" can mean "He has a bump on his head", or (Week 18):

There is a young man from the Rand,  
Who plays in a trendy jazz band.  
The trumpet he blows  
Gets us tapping our toes,  
We jump and we *bump* i.e. "dance"  
Oh, it's grand!

5.1.1.2.5 Polysemantic words with multiple meaning: "dull"

That is a *dull* book. (boring)

Grey is a *dull* colour. (not brightly colourful)

Week 8:

There was a young lady from Hull,  
Who fell down and damaged her skull,  
She used to be very  
Happy and merry,  
But now she's so terribly *dull!* (stupid)

The benefits of using the Whole Word Method are that children certainly readily learn single words that they fancy - such as signs, and names on food containers and phonetically difficult longer words such as "aeroplane". It also has been proved (Dechant and Smith, 1977;220) that the reader can recognize four to five random letters or four to five words shown on one tachistoscope run.

But words on their own as discussed, have limited meaning, this is why the Poetry Method makes use of the phrase and sentence techniques of reading.

5.1.2 The Poetry Method and/or the Phrase Method, and poetry's affect on eye movements

The Phrase Method places emphasis on *meaning*. The idea of reading is not to read one word at a time, but to aid the recognition of groups of words at each fixation of the eyes which will encourage faster reading (Norman Lewis, 1958;13). It is not that good readers actually focus on phrases. Anderson and Dearborn took photographic records of eye movements (in Gray, 1969;84) found that good readers don't fix their eyes on phrases but eyes fixate at more or less regular intervals along the lines. The recognition is in *mental thought* units, and is not a visual process.

In Cattell's early studies of tachistoscopic perception, he found that words are perceived as a whole. They have a character as a unit just as single letters do. He also found that the speed of reading depended on the degree of familiarity with the language (Bruner, 1974). Martinez (1980) studied the size of the processing used, and found when a child reads word by word, the important ideas get lost, and it is far better to train comprehension and recall by teaching in units of phrases and sentences.

Artley (1977) quite succinctly points out that readers are no more concerned with separate words when reading than speakers are concerned with separate words when speaking.

Morris (1957) and N. Leis (1958) (in Waller and MacKinnon, 1979), in their work on faster reading and faster comprehension, agree that the skill of reading in phrases speeds up fluency and comprehension.

In the Poetry Method, this is made obvious very quickly. Once the child knows the poem and has repeated it several times, he can grasp a line or a phrase at a time. Kavangah and Mattingly (1972 : 144), believe that it is the *inner speech* or *auditory imagery* of the sentence already read that slows down the reader so that if he can become familiar with the nature of the text as he can with a short poem, this will speed up reading as he can "build up preliminary representation efficiently and synthesize at a very high speed".

It must be remembered that when reading there is a double task for the eye - a visual and a motor one. Although there are some schools of thought that say faulty eye movements are due to poor understanding of subject matter, i.e. Orton and Tinker (Sapir and Nitzburg, 1973 : 123), there are those (Dodge, Judd and Buswell [in Blair 1956]) who have made developmental studies on poor and good readers and found that good readers make few fixations and regressions where poor readers make many. Eye movements can be trained (as can any motor movement) in the Poetry Method along with phrasing, as the child *must* slide his eyes onto the next line to complete the phrase.

We can slide  
down  
the  
hill

or  
down  
the  
stairs

or anywhere.

Or down the roof  
    where the shingles broke.

Or down the trunk  
    of the back-yard oak...

Extract from *Sliding* by M. C. Livingstone

When I try to skate  
My feet are so wary  
They grit and they grate  
And then I watch Mary  
Easily gliding  
Like an ice fairy....

Extract from *Skating* by H. Asquith.

Another way of training eye movements is by using the poem itself. In the following poem, each middle phrase is repeated, as too is the start of the sentence. The child is encouraged to make his eye 'jump' from the key words at the end of the line to the one on the next line, and, to make him read faster, he is encouraged to read the whole poem in one breath (Week 13).

*This is the Key*

Keywords: key, kingdom, city, town, street, lane, yard, house, room, bed, basket, flowers

This is the <i>key</i> of the <i>kingdom</i>			
In that	<i>kingdom</i>	there is a	<i>city</i>
In that	<i>city</i>	there is a	<i>town</i>
In that	<i>town</i>	there is a	<i>street</i>
In that	<i>street</i>	there is a	<i>lane</i>
In that	<i>lane</i>	there is a	<i>yard</i>
In that	<i>yard</i>	there is a	<i>house</i>
In that	<i>house</i>	there is a	<i>room</i>
In that	<i>room</i>	there is a	<i>bed</i>
On that	<i>bed</i>	there is a	<i>basket</i>
In that	<i>basket</i>	there are	some <i>flowers</i> .

To help improve eye movements, the need for which Bayley, 1957 (in Sapir & Nitzburg, 1973;124) claims is due to habits built up from lack of confidence, one can mask out what has already been read, or what is to be read, or mask top and bottom with paper so that only a phrase at a time can be read.

In traditional "phrase method" teaching, phrases which are taken out of context and are written on strips of cardboard are compared to other *meaningless* phrases, familiar words are noted and new ones learned by endless drill and repetition and by "whole word" techniques (see Dolch McMenemy word list in Appendix). In the Poetry Method the phrases or lines of poetry are taught by the Impress Method, echo reading or assisted reading (see 7.1.3) and the phrase is never taken out of the context of the whole poem.

### 5.1.3 The Sentence Method

Were poetry not written in phrases, it would actually seem that the Poetry Method is taught through the third stage of analytic methods - the sentence method. Huey in Gray (1969;85) explains that the sentence is no more a string of words than the idea that words are a string of letters. The sentence is read and spoken naturally only when the total *meaning* is prominent in the consciousness of the reader or the speaker.

It is this *natural* reading of the sentences "with expression" that is the most important part of the teaching of the sentence method through poetry. With certain poems the children are directed to find important groups of words or specific words within the sentence:

Words requiring emphasis of expression:

*Ching-a-bang-bang*  
And a *clang* and  
    a *bong*,  
We are the *gang*  
That belong  
To King-Kong!

Week 13

All the words that may be new:

A *tramp* on a *bench* in the *park*,  
Said, "I'll *pitch* my *tent* here  
    for a *lark*.  
If a *cop* snoops *around*,  
I'll *pretend* I have *found*  
A *camp* site for *tramps* after *dark*.

Week 18

The words may be those that contain the sound of the week, e.g. "mp", "nt" end blends:

*Tramp, tramp, tramp*,  
The hobo's got the *cramp*.  
He sits in a *tent*  
Which somebody *lent*  
But his legs are terribly *damp*.

In the first weeks of the Poetry Method a good deal of the reading is modelled on the teacher's way of reading the poems. The idea of this is that if they hear and can repeat the "tune" of the poem (the stress, juncture and pitch), they grasp the meaning as the words flow sensibly. This grasping of the *meaning* through the language structures of the sentence, the psycholinguist Lefevre says "depends on the intonation, the word and sentence order, the grammatical

inflections and certain key function words" (Dechant and Smith 1977;210).

Certain words can be the only correct ones because of the structure of the sentence and the meaning it gives:

I woke up one night from deep ..... (sleep)  
And peeped out to ..... in ..... street, (look, the)  
The people seemed dead,  
I sped back to bed,  
And covered my head with the ..... (sheet). (Week 10)  
ee sound

This last word "sheet" can either be guessed from the sentence structure or more importantly from the structure of this particular stanza. One is expecting the word to rhyme in this case with the word "street". This is the most exciting aspect of teaching reading through poetry - the rhymes build an expectation of words - what better manner of teaching unknown words?

At first glance seeing the lists of spelling words worked out in systematic order of phonic combinations, and noting the accent on the specific sound of the week to be taught, one may think that the Poetry Method is a phonic reading method - parts of it are.

## 5.2 Synthetic Reading Methods

The three synthetic methods of teaching reading are the Alphabet Method, the Phonic Method and the Syllabification Method. The true Alphabet Method used

for centuries past is to learn the name of each letter, e.g. Ay, Bee, See, Dee, etc. before proceeding to the word, i.e. See, Ay, Tee says "cat". In the Poetry Method the *sounds* not the names of the letters are taught, together with pictures containing that sound as part of its visual pattern. See Week 1: "c" in the handle of the "cup", "v" as the "vase", etc. (ideas taken from Abraham Rosen, 1966).

Gabrielle Edelman (Dechant & Smith 1977;205) found that the shapes of words offered as a cue next to the letter cues were rejected in favour of *letter* cues. This, she felt was probably due to the primacy of the first letters and the recency of the last, or that the first and last letters bordered by white space stand out more than those letters embedded in the middle of a word. She was all in favour of teaching individual letters well so that letter cues would improve teaching of reading.

Once the separate alphabet letters can be distinguished auditorily and visually (Weeks 2 and 3), the first of the short vowel sounds is introduced, from lists of words using the Phonic Method (see Week 4).

When speaking of the 'Phonics Method' we are talking of a method of:

- \* word analysis
- \* a form of decoding
- \* word attack
- \* word recognition through phonic analysis and training the pupil to remember earlier encounters of that same phonic combination.

The Phonics Method is "the process a reader uses to recognize the speech sounds that letters or letter patterns represent" (May, 1973;71). The latter may

also be called *gramaphonic analysis* - the relationship between the written and spoken symbols in a language (May 1973;72). Although phonics originated with a man called Ickelsamer in 1534 (Dechant and Smith 1977;210), it only came into common practice in English and American Schools in the last 30 years. The method has its fans and virulent contenders.

### 5.2.1 Those in favour of phonics

Amongst those *in favour* are:

- \* Crosby (1969) who says that phonics provides the child with all the raw materials needed for learning. Once he has learnt the sounds of the letters and syllabification, a child can learn to pronounce and recognise many words that he sees.
- \* Flesch (1955) - the protagonist against the Whole Word Method (see 5.4.1) and who felt that if you teach the child what each letter stands for, he can read.
- \* Frank May (1973;68) says that in the early stages phonics is almost the essence of reading because one has to become cognizant with the relationship between letters and sounds, the memorizing of sight words is insufficient as a tool to becoming an independent reader.

Others who echo these statements are the following *in favour* of the use of Phonics: Money (1962); Reed and Klopp (in Frost 1967;308); American Children's TV Workshop production "The Electric Company"

(1971); Donaghue (1971); Durkin (1972); Keislar (1974); Harris (1979) and Speckles (1980).

In an examination of 45 phonic rules and their applicability to a vocabulary of nearly 5,500 words used for spelling from Grade 2 to Std IV (Grade 6 in America), the rules were found to be 80% to 100% applicable (Zintz, 1975;248).

- \* Paul and Jean Hanna at Stanford University in the 1960s (Donaghue, 1971;90) proved on a computer analysis of 17,000 words that English is usually a "reliable set of phoneme-grapheme correspondences. Noam Chomsky and Morris Halle the transformational grammarians agree with this, and added that English is based on morphological principles as well (ibid.).
- \* Dolch (in Frost, 1967;196) agrees with the teaching of letter-only phonics to beginners, and once the child has grasped the use of this to drop the method in favour of whole-word reading.
- \* Bishop taught adults Arabic words with no meaning (Crosby 1969) and found that her phonics group performed best learning all eight words in seven trials. She found that phonics provided the best method for learning new words, and that many individuals who are taught the Look-Say Method teach themselves the Phonic Method. She also advocates teaching beginnings such as br, cr, pr, wh, th, etc. (as is done in the Poetry Method, Weeks 11 to 17) and syllables and common endings such as -ion, -ing, -es, -ed, -ist, etc. (e.g. -le endings Week 40).

- \* Spache (in Kieslar 1974;197) suggests that elements of words which help convenient recognition should be taught, e.g. "-ink" in "think", "-ight" in "fight", "night", "sight", etc. This idea is seen in the Poetry Method where medial and final phonograms are taught in sets:

e.g. Week 21: (ai)

fail	sail
rail	pail
hail	snail
jail	tail
mail	wail
nail	

from Week 18:

camp	lamp
damp	cramp
stamp	tramp, etc.

In the Poetry Method the lists of words are taught as *reading* and then a week later their *spelling* is tested. Spache et al (Frost 1967;196) and Benthuli et al in their series *Spell Correctly* (1974) (in Myers and Hammill, 1969;102) say that spelling cannot be taught from a reading approach, because when we are reading we are analysing the written word phonically and moving from letters to sounds, whilst when spelling we are moving from sound to letters.

- \* In the Schoolfield and Timberlake Phonovisual Programme used extensively for remediation, the groups of words are not given

to the child as in the Poetry Method, the method is to build their own list. For example, given the word "keep" as the leading word the child is encouraged to build "peep" and then "sheep", etc. This manner of working from the particular to the general is used in the *Breakthrough* word building scheme.

### 5.2.2 Using phonics in the Poetry Method

It must be remembered that the use of phonics in the Poetry Method is not a *method* of teaching reading. It is a *skill* taught for word analysis and word identification and a means of explaining the rules of spelling. Phonics is only a help with the first step of Gray's definition of reading (Zintz, 1975;205): "Reading is perception, comprehension, reaction and integration". So phonics is used in the Poetry Method as an added training in perceiving and pronouncing.

#### 5.2.2.1 Analytic or synthetic procedures?

The first question when thinking about the presentation of each new sound in the Poetry Method was whether to use an *analytic* or *synthetic* procedure. At first the children are taught to *synthesize* Week 4. mā.....d mad; mā.....t mat; mā.....p map, Sā.....m Sam, etc. By the time they have caught on to how to blend the words they then look in the poems for similar three letter words (aided by colour-coding) and switch to *analytic* procedures of deductive reasoning. Now the generalizations - the whole words of mixed letters are there and they are told to find the particular - the "a" sound within the words in the poems.

Every new phonic sound is taught within a meaningful content. Even when the words are read from lists either the child gives the word encased within a meaningful sentence or the teacher says a sentence - and the word is repeated: "*Fawn* - the *fawn* is a baby deer. *Fawn*."

**5.2.2.5 Spelling through phonics:** When writing the sounds the children are made aware that the writing of the word is related to its pronunciation, they are shown that letters stand for sounds and they understand auditorily and visually what beginning, middle, and end sounds mean. This first point is very important in the first spelling lessons of the Poetry Method. The children arrive as poor spellers and at last have a chance to succeed. Even the list for the twelve and thirteen year-olds is of words written as they sound, e.g. "expect", "splendid" (Week 1, Book 3) as per Durkin (1972;311).

### **5.2.3 Critics of the Phonic Method**

Amongst the critics of the Phonic Method are: Schonell (1965); Wardhaugh (1969); Goodman and Fleming (1969); William Gray, et al (1969); Vernon (1971); George Bernard Shaw (in Goodman, 1973), and other linguists: Le Fevre and Bloomfield (in Frost, 1967); Mattingly & Kavanagh (1971); Hodges and Rudorf (1972); Smith (1971 & 1977); Kirk and Chalfant (1984).

The prime disagreement is that phonics are *boring, frustrating, confusing* and *take too long* to teach:

**Boring:** words have to be kept short and regular in the beginning to illustrate the rules, and the content of phonics books (Daniels and Diack Royal Road Readers (1963), Boyce: Gay Way Series (1975), Makar Primary Phonics (1968). This is one of the reasons that the very first poems in the Poetry Method are songs "Pat-a-cake" action poems:- "Listen to the Band" or funny poems "Superman" to grab and hold the child's interest.

**Frustrating:** Vernon (1971) says that a child may become utterly confused by phonic drill and unable to understand its relevance to reading. There is no drill in the Phonics Method - the topic is changed every five to ten minutes and it is not re-done unless the child has extreme difficulty - even then it has been found that the same child who may not be able to blend the lists of words can get everything correct when doing the phonics pages, or when reading the poems, so repetition is not used much. Vernon (1971;189) found that emphasis on phonetics seemed to decrease rather than increase the ability for auditory analysis. Gates (1939) compared word recognition and phonetic word recognition. The latter did better, but because they were taught meaningful words. He is against phonics drill or the use of nonsense words to teach or test phonic rules (the latter opinion would be expressed by all the linguists as well). Schonell (1965) thought that drilling the phonic combinations was a waste of

time for the intelligent child, as he understands the phonetics and blending of word sound for himself.

*Slow*

Although phonetic reading does bring about improvement in the mechanics of reading and there is an improvement in accuracy, there is less understanding in what is read if it is a word by word slow analysis and synthesis, e.g. "The b..a..d c..a..t..er..pill..ar sa..t on the car..pe..t in the f..l..a..t" (by now the teacher has fallen asleep with boredom, and the child has begun to build up an antipathy to reading). If taught too early in the reading process the child will look only at the first letters of common words and guess the rest instead of looking at the whole word at once or using context, e.g. "The horse and cart 'wandering' into the middle of the road" (for wandered). Although the phonic constituents of a word give an all-important clue, unless they are linked with the sounds of the child's own speech experience the psycholinguists say the sound will not be retained, so phonics drill is not to be commended.

*Skills needed  
for Phonics*

Unless the child has the following auditory and visual skills he will not be able to make the letter-sound associations which form the foundation of phonics:

Visual discrimination (seeing the similarities and differences in letters)

Visual memory (remembering letters, and words though not to the extent needed in the Whole-Word Method)

Auditory memory (ability to remember sounds)

Auditory discrimination (recognition of the similarities and differences in sounds)

Auditory blending (the ability to analyze and blend sounds together to form words).

Many critics are against the domination of phonics in the teaching of reading with a preoccupation with letter-sound relationships and word-sound relationships, and techniques of naming these to the detriment of meaning. It becomes a guessing game and the word is seen in isolation, e.g. the word "live" in the sentence "Tom went to live with his grandmother" will be read as "liev" unless the child has been taught to consider the whole sentence, the sense it makes and what the author is saying (May 1973;69).

### *Meaning*

It is generally believed that it is not meaningful to introduce all the consonants before the vowels or in isolation from the vowels as the child does not understand either the relationship between sounds or that they can be decoded or blended into words. The letters - both consonants and vowels are introduced first in the poetry method but it must be remembered that this is a *remedial* method so it is a re-cap or a

re-learning of something not grasped the first time around.

From the above criticisms it seems that ideally, phonics should be used only so that they are not emphasized to the exclusion of meaning.

By being made aware of both the whole-word and phonic methods if the child comes across "cat" he knows it has regular spelling and can be spoken as it sounds and if he comes across "came" it can be taught as a sight word or within a sentence. If the word is "came" the word can be given and the appropriate word analysis skill can be taught later when "by the principle of pacing" (Dechant & Smith 1977;227) the pupil will soon discover he can work it out and understand it as a phonetically consistent word.

The psycholinguistic approach shows how meaning *must not* and can not be divorced from the process of learning to read. In the following chapter it will be seen how the poetry fits into this approach.

### Conclusion

It is quite acceptable to draw from any or all ways of teaching reading when the pupil is stuck and cannot read. However, it must be stressed that this researcher would like to see *meaning* as a basis for all proper reading.

**Summary**

Analytic and Synthetic Reading Methods are taught in the Poetry Method. In this chapter the Analytic Methods - the Whole-Word, Phrase and Sentence Methods are criticized. The Synthetic Method used in the Poetry Method and the Phonics Method are also critically analysed.

## CHAPTER 6

### 6 SEMANTICS AND THE READING FOR MEANING THROUGH POETRY

#### 6.1 Reading Should be Meaningful

It has been seen that many children are taught to read following this pattern of the breakdown of language according to linguistic analysis as per Fries (1962), Allen (1966), Frost (1967), Gibson & Levin(1980), Kavanagh and Mattingly (1972), Goodman and Lefevre (in Zintz, 1975) and Oglivie (1979).

First: the phonology - consonant letters then sounds

Second: the morphology - the basic sight words

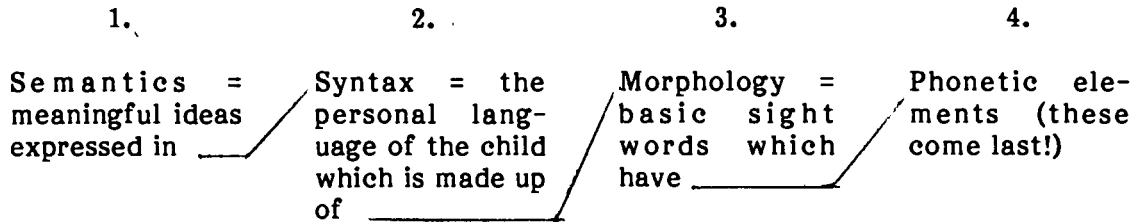
Third: the syntax of language - presented in selected sentences,

and,

Finally: the semantics or meaningful message of the language of reading pried out of what has been read with bountiful use of illustrations that teach children to look at the pictures for meaning, rather than at content (see illustrations, 6.6.1).

According to Burke (in Zintz 1975;66) this very formal approach of teachers giving prescribed lessons on phonemes, sight words and syntax before finally extracting meaning makes learning to read very difficult for the child. He believes that *beginning reading* should begin with any ideas or concepts that have personal meaning and importance to the child - he dislikes the teaching of

names and sounds of initial consonants and suggests learning to read should look like this:



Holt in his book *How Children Learn* (1970) agrees with Burke. He says we spend too long in getting a skill first and then trying to find interesting things to do with it. To him the sensible thing is to find something worth doing then because of being fired with desire or curiosity the skills will be learnt as they are needed.

Whichever way round it is taught, according to the psycholinguists the ideal method of teaching reading is one that not only includes the structure and rules of language, but also one that begins with ideas and concepts that the child will enjoy and remember, and one that will smoothly continue the sounds, melody and structure of oral language.

The meaning of what is read can itself be broken down into three distinct levels (Gray, 1969 : 67), the *literal*, *related* and *implied* meanings. The *literal* meaning is only too obvious in what Criscuolo (in Frost 1967;231) refers to as "boring readers".

## 6.2 Boring Readers

Boring readers are the rigid, concrete type factual story - often accompanied by equally dull or unrelated illustrations that make up most Basal readers. *Related meanings* in those sort of readers are seen in the subsequent series or practice readers on the same level that extend the concrete subjects and their activities. *Implicit meaning* is what *should* be found in the reading content but is not often enough there for the child to discover. It is some extra message, some delight, affect, moral or hidden excitement that changes the reading from something mundane to something gripping.

The strengths of Basal readers (Zintz 1975:210) lie in their sequential order of reading skills and the continuity of these through readers in the series used in higher grades or standards. Generally there is an integration of all the skills in reading - and a gradual introduction and practice of new words and word attack skills.

But, many question whether the words included in Basal Readers constitute a lever for the grasping of implicit meaning in early reading.

For many children the barren idiom of these books will be the first words of the language of Shakespeare, Blake, Conrad and Nabokov that they are going to read. And when you consider that the five, six and seven years olds . . . are expected to have their curiosity aroused by such mind-spinning tales as Fluff running up a tree, it is a wonder that only 20 per cent of school leavers . . . get out illiterate!

(Lansdown, 1974;69)

Critics of Basal readers include Flesch (1955); Allen (in Frost, 1967;177); Goodman (in Frost 1967;214); Britten (1970); Arnstein (1970); Davies (1975); Zintz (1975); Elkind (1976) and Bettelheim (1981). They agree that the following are the limitations of Basal readers: the dull limited vocabulary, redundancy of text, shallow content, lack of literary style, the stereotyping of race and social groups, the middle-class bias, presentation of unrealistic life and lack of stimulation to the child's curiosity with ideas that are often impounded by confusing illustrations.

### 6.2.1 Dull, Limited Vocabulary

Basal readers and their content have been questioned by many critics. Cirscuolo (in Frost 1967, 231) says that it is the rigidity of the vocabulary that he regards as an insult to a child's intelligence in these boring readers. The concept of a controlled vocabulary and the gradual introduction and repetition of increasingly more difficult words is used in almost all basal readers. The sort of control that is measured over the vocabulary includes the *amount of new vocabulary per book*, for example in the "Janet and John" series (a Basal reader that has been translated into dozens of languages) (Munro, 1969).

The child learning to read by a combination  
of the phonic and whole-word methods finds:

27 new look words in	HERE WE GO
26 new look words in 13 new phonic words in	JANET AND JOHN I
46 new look words in 89 new phonic words in	JANET AND JOHN II
72 new look words in 124 new phonic words in	JANET AND JOHN III

97 new look words in  
207 new phonic words in

JANET AND JOHN IV

441 new words in

ONCE UPON A TIME

In the first year slow readers who complete Book I will read 66 words. Some children only get to read book IV in Std I (3rd Grade), so by that time they will only have encountered 701 reading words when they enter school with a receptive vocabulary varying between 13,000 to 23,000 words according to Templin (Burns, 1986;114). (In the Poetry Method Book I, spellings alone, without the new words in the poems, will introduce 1,900 new words).

The *frequency control and kind of words* chosen is the next vocabulary consideration and this is what irritates critics such as Bettelheim (1981). He says it is "condescending" to offer children who have a functional vocabulary fifty times as large - a vocabulary consisting of quite complicated and emotionally very significant words - words such as "dog, fun, come, look, little, boats, jumps, here, down, etc." He believes, and has found in his Orthogenic School (ibid.;30) that words carrying emotional significance for the child - such as "love, hate, brother, food, etc", were learnt after only seeing them once or twice, and the children learnt to spell them and write them after a few more repetitions.

The number of *repetitions* is another area of control of basal readers. For example, in the first Janet and John reader, "Here we go", "look" and "see" are repeated 20 times; "come", 23; "here", 11; "up", 9, etc. (Munro, 1969;14). The rate of introductions is also carefully

noted, e.g. "and" is introduced on page 8 and repeated on pages 1, 12 and 13; "come" is introduced on page 6 and repeated on pages 8, 10, 12, 13, etc. Perish the teacher who dares introduce a word before time! One has to agree with Gray (1969), who believes that it is the teachers who choose these boring readers who are at fault. He feels they themselves are uneducated and were taught to read by formal synthetic methods, resulting in their choice of similar-type readers for their pupils. He says (ibid p. 116), that Basal readers are so formal they do not give the children the knowledge that books can enrich one's experience or books can help solve personal or group problems.

To ensure language development, reading from a reading series is far from sufficient. Children need to listen and read from *purer* language such as that offered by poetry. The high level oral expression trains and offers higher levels of thought. Walter Loban (in Frost ed. 1967;17) feels that the grammatical sentence pattern is not what counts, but what is done to achieve greater flexibility and modification of ideas within those patterns that proves to be the real measure of proficiency with language.

### 6.2.2 Redundancy of Text

When Basal readers were compared to free reading choices of children it was found that the content of free reading was far less redundant and the mean sentence length was much longer (Gray 1969;101). One of the most notable aspects of boring basal readers is the short, choppy sentences in the primers. For example, Flesch (in Frost,

1967;240) found that the length of a sentence, decided by counting the words or syllables in it, gave the best measure of the complexity of sentences. Glaser (1974) also found when applying Botel, Dawkins and Granowsky's *Syntactic Complexity Formula* that sentence length is a good measure of complexity. Although Robinson (ibid.) found that varying lengths of a sentence had very little effect on the obtaining of meaning, publishers have required authors of beginner readers to keep to "readability formulas" of sentence length.

### 6.2.3 Shallow Content

A measure of difficulty is *word depth* (Bourmouth in Zintz 1975;252) or the number of grammatical relationships per sentence. Sentences from primers were studied by Strickland (ibid;243) who concluded that no matter how difficult the grammar, those phrases and sentences that are heard more often are more likely to be comprehended than those seldom heard. John Carroll in his article *Psycholinguists and the study of teaching reading* (in Bettelheim, 1981;263) found that most children can handle grammar that is far more complex than that offered in a diet of Basal readers. Chall (1958) (ibid;47) said that the more one adds verbs and nouns the more difficult the sentence gets, but personal pronouns, proper nouns and colourful words make the sentence easier to understand. According to Davies (1975), while learning to read, children make use of their implicit knowledge of grammar. This is yet another reason for the necessity of equivocating reading to speech.

Asher and Markell (Achenbach, 1978;49) in a study to test the hypothesis that low motivation may cause boys to perform poorly

when compared with girls on most tests of reading skills, found that the sexes did not differ much when the material was of high interest. However, when the *interest was low* and the *content shallow*, boys performed very much worse than their own high-interest scores, as against girls. This lack of interest in the content of reading tests may be equally as evident in boys' general lack of reading interest as compared to that of girls in the first years of reading using Basal readers.

The Poetry Method does not have a limited vocabulary or a redundancy of text. From the first the poems are aimed at the interest levels of the child. For example, the first reading lesson in Week 4 introduced a common fantasy which transcends race or social grouping, or even middle-class bias:

**Superman:**

I am  
Superman.  
I fly like a bat  
And spring like a cat.  
I began  
To drive  
Dad's van  
Down a hill  
Until  
I had a crash.  
What a smash!  
I was  
Superman!

In the Poetry Method there are no stereotype characters continually returning to mundane activities, rather many of the early poems stimulate the child's curiosity. For example in week 14 the tenth reading lesson:

**A Duck is born (qu sound)**

Quick, come quickly Mum and Dad.  
The duck's quite crazy, hopping mad!  
She flaps her wings, goes quack, quack, quack!  
Her egg is quivering on the rack.

The inside quakes, and then is still.  
The egg is cracking! What a thrill!  
We'll just stay quiet, the duckling in it  
Is due to pop out any minute!

**6.3 The Interest Level Offered in Poetry and Those Interested in Poetry**

Osgood, Suci and Tannenbaum (in Wardhaugh, 1969;79) looked at the semantic differential in reading material or the ways in which words - particularly the lay-out of words - affect or reveal one's behaviour. They found three factors into which words may be defined in a "semantic space". These are an *evaluation* factor (good vs bad), a *potency* factor (strong vs weak) and an *activity* factor (fast vs slow).

Since poetry has been described as:

gathering up the emotions, impressions, images, and sounds which all people share in common.... It links people together through experiences crystallized in language rhythmically expressed and in values built up that would not be possible with other media of communication.

(Boyd 1977;1)

then it would seem the way words are laid out in poetry would fulfill the factors measured above more rapidly than would blank prose.

There are those who extol the use of poetry as an adjunct to teaching reading. Amongst them are: Frost (1967), Gray (1969), Britten (1970), Logan (1970), Mattingly (1972), Boyd (1973), Rushby (1974), Hollingsworth (1977), Jackson and Musill (1977), Kantor (1978), Fox (1981), Holbrook (1981) and Stibbs (1981).

Martin (1981) used rhyming folk songs to improve expressive and receptive language. She writes about how intrigued children were to be given folksongs to read. Besides being charged with interest by the content, they also developed research skills in reading more about the songs at the library.

But only Bush and Giles (1977) and Moe and Hopkins (1983) actually suggest the use of poetry in remediation of reading problems. The latter give lists of joke books and riddle and rhyme books that may be useful, but do not elaborate on the method of teaching these. Bush and Giles include some rhymes and poems in their remedial programme, but they are not integral to the programme which also includes games and general reading activities, e.g. jump rope songs and chants and rhymes involving change in speed (pp. 252-254) and the teaching of expression.

It is this basic sense of rhythm and the folklore of children that Widlake (1977;244) aims to spread when he teaches poetry to any age child. The following poem is one of his from a series of lessons aimed at their sense of rhythm and their folklore - the children make the noises and sounds.

*Granny and Grandfather Griptometoe*

Granny and Grandfather Griptometoe  
Sit late in the night while their lamp burns low;  
She with her knitting and he with his wine,  
And the slow-ticking clock to keep them in time.

Her needles they click, his bottles they pop,  
Click! Pop! Click! Pop!  
to the tick of the clock.

Rosenblatt (1980) emphasizes that this delight children have in rhythms, the intonations, blending and clash of vowels and consonants often happens before the "meaning" of the words is caught by the child. The child can catch the tone, mood and emotional impact just through awareness of sound, rhythm and images.

### 6.3.1 Do children like poetry?

To test children's liking of poetry, in a survey of 1,401 primary schoolchildren (Donaghue 1971;316) found that though urban children liked poetry more than rural children, altogether two out of three pupils liked poetry.

The type of poems liked by children under ten years old are humorous and factual story-telling poems, particularly limericks.

The study found that children disliked sentimental poems or those difficult to understand, and were unimpressed by the Japanese Haiku - a 17 syllable unrhymed verse, e.g.

Snow softly falling  
Feathers floating forever  
silently downwards.

Susan Weiber

However, Rosenblatt (1980;220) claims that he taught the Haiku very

successfully - as creative writing means with those children equivalent to Std V.

According to Arnstein (1970), one should not tell a child that a poem is "good" or "bad", this only confuses them. Rather let the child tell you if he likes it. If he knows you want his opinion, his attention becomes aroused and focussed, and leads to his wanting to re-read the poems. Children like the aspect of surprise in poetry and enjoy the strange imagery.

Whitin (1983) says that children should hear a poem again and again as appreciation takes time. Children often say they like a poem for the way it *sounds*, they like surprise and strange imagery. Sounds come first, and appreciation later, that is why the poems are heard by the child in one lesson in the Poetry Method and handed over to be practised at home and repeated before analysis - if any.

The intense interest children show in the verse and rhymes indicates that this means of high-oral expression is music to their ears. They do not mind listening to poems over and over again, nor do they find it any effort reading them because they are short and are written with the sort of crisp phrases used in children's speech. Because of this, the practice essential to early reading, or for those with reading problems is easily achieved.

Feely (1983;654) says the print should be such that the "aural-oral experience" (or spoken-heard words) will support the learning to read experience. This is probably why the Dr. Seuss rhythm and rhyme

books have been so popular. The Poetry Method is written particularly for those children who have been fed a diet of boring readers. If, as Mattingly (1972;34) says,

the process of learning to read is the process of transfer from the *auditory* signs for language signals which the child has already learned to the new *visual* signs for the same signals

well then, we must let the child *read* the rhymes and rhythms that he has already learnt how to recite and chant.

In writing a poem, the versifier synthesizes sentences in such a way according to Halle (Mattingly, 1970) that not only the rules of language are conformed to, but certain phonetic features are brought out by an additional set of rules. Children love the alliteration and onomatopoeia, and rhythm and now they may read the sounds they love which they will never encounter in Basal readers.

....Old Noah, he cried Why a glass be high  
But Thingummyjig says STORM!  
The winds will shriek and the clouds will fly,  
And the forest trees will snap.  
And the rains will drum, and the flood will  
come,  
To wash the world off the map!  
    With a RAP iti-TAPPETTY,  
    And a DRIPPETY -tippety TAP!

Extract from *The Thingummyjig* by R.C. Scrivan.

Pitter patter! falls the rain  
On the schoolroom windowpane.  
Such a plashing! Such a dashing!  
Will it e'er be dry again?....

Extract from *The Umbrella Brigade* by Laura E. Richards.

Through the Poetry Method they will have the opportunity to read the sounds they love - alliteration, onomatopoeia and rhythm which they will not get in Basal readers:

....Clip-clop, clippety-clop  
The horse plods along with a flip  
and a flop.

Flip-flap, flippety-flap  
The bat blinks blindly, he's snapped  
in a trap.

*On the Farm* (Week 16) l-blends.

An important aspect of poetry is its brevity - the pleasure it gives is almost immediate as Meek (1977;92) says, a learning problem child or inexperienced reader likes to get to the point quickly, he cannot defer gratification as long as it takes to read a book. The more mature a reader, the longer he can wait and tolerate doubt and dissatisfaction before a happy ending.

The interest level is high and pinpointed in a poem, children love to get to a climax quickly in reading and here in a matter of a few short verses, a succinct and complete story is presented with beginning, middle and end:

I once met a witch who lived in *my* road.  
In a *horrible* house; with a *horrible* toad.  
She was *chilly* and *thin* and *wicked* as sin -  
When she shouted I *prickled* all over my fur!  
She didn't like *me* and I didn't like her.

I told her she ought to be *loving* and *good*.  
But she didn't say (child's name) I *know* that I  
should.  
With *pin-scratchy* eyes she measured my size  
If I went any closer she'd have me for *tea*,

Oh, I didn't like *her*, and *she* didn't like me.

What was to be done! What was to be *done!*  
She'd *silence* the birds - she'd darken the *sun!*  
But *I* thought of a way, and I *did* it that day -  
I *barred* all her windows and *nailed* up the door,  
And she'll *never* come shouting at *me* any more.

*The Witch and I* by J. Lurie.

Children are obsessed with 'wrong' and 'right' and love nonsense rhymes such as Simple Simon telling how he tries to catch a whale in a bucket. The function of such rhymes and tales is obvious, as the children realize how stupid Simon is and can feel "right" in correcting him in their thoughts. Chukovsky (in Britten, 1970;80) says that "every departure from the normal in rhymes, strengthens the child's conception of the normal". The "wrong" and "right" can even be applied to less concrete actions, and children love to correct something with their internalized social values.

"There's been an accident!" they said  
"Your servant's cut in half: he's dead."  
"Indeed!" said Mr. Jones, "then please,  
Send me the half that's got my keys."

*Mr Jones* by Harry Graham.

Children like to find semantic absurdities or play on words:

Once there was an elephant  
Who tried to use the telephant -  
No! No! I mean an elephone  
Who tried to use the telephone -  
(Dear me! I am not certain quite  
That even now I've got it right)

However it was, he got his trunk  
Entangled in the telephunk;  
the more he tried to get it free,  
The louder buzzed the telephee -  
(I fear I'd better drop the song  
of elephop and telephong!

*Eletelophony* by Laura E. Richards

Poems can help pupils to see their own selves, and to develop a healthy sense of humour - possibly to feel more at ease in communication situations (Donaghue 1971):

"How now brown cow!"  
You know these words by heart.  
The bow of a boat is at the front,  
The bow holds an arrow's dart.

*Wow! Those Vowels!* (Week 30)  
ow = oe and ow = ou

I see ships  
Taking trips  
To where the sun is shining,  
Where pink shellfish  
Are served on a dish  
And each cloud has a silver lining.

*Dreams* (Week 11) sh sound

Those critical of these sorts of nonsense poems is that they lead to unpredictability. Frank Smith (Kantor 1978) and other psycholinguists say that reading proficiency has a good deal to do with the skill of predicting what will come next and lack of predictability will not be helpful in learning to read, particularly at beginning levels.

Some poems lead one through to a final image which is recognisably predictive (ibid.):

Going to school  
I pass a street  
where there is a hardware store  
and next to it  
a flower shop.  
I like to shop  
and greet  
the flowers on display,  
then see next door  
different kinds of blooms:  
bright paint cans,  
shiny pots and pans,  
a bouquet ...  
of *mops and brooms*.

*Going to School* by Eve Merriam.

Would the child need much explaining?

Sometimes there is a surprise ending in a poem, which is even more fun for the child than continual predictive reading:

In the deep sleep forest  
there were ferns  
there were feathers  
there was fur  
and a soft ripe peach  
on a branch within my

r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r-r

*Alarm Clock* by Eve Merrimam

**6.3.2 How is meaning obtained from poetry?**

The meaning of a poem is intrinsic and need not be explained. Bryant (Shapiro, 1970; 133) says that "sound is not on one side and meaning on the other, there is only expressive sound and resonant meaning". Depending on what is to be taught from the poem, it is the pleasure to be attended to, and the child grasps what meaning he

will. John Gregory (Widlake, 1977) says that this pleasure that poetry emits is due to the strengthening effect it has upon the emotions, and this effect is a useful ally in remedial teaching as it aids in the development between teacher and pupil without which nothing happens. The joy and pleasure in sharing the rhythms and contents of the poem with the child makes the remedial lesson fun, and each child had his own way of responding to a poem.

The remedial teacher has to take care that she doesn't expect a re-narration of the poem read - a heavy labouring of the theme is what is to be avoided, a certain amount of the meaning has to be left to inner imagery.

Ted Hughes (1967), the poet laureate, speaks of the "charge and charm" that even quite complicated poetry can have, quite apart from the child's understanding, or being able to explain, or knowing what is going on.

Explaining the intrinsic meaning that poetry provides, Wordsworth said:

Poetry, if good for anything must appeal forcibly  
to the imagination and feelings.

(Rushby, 1974;14).

Coleridge, the poet, wrote:

The immediate object of poetry is pleasure, not truth.

(ibid.)

And W.H. Auden, who has defined poetry as "paying homage by naming" (Britten 1970;120), in his poem *In Memory of Yeats*, said:

For poetry makes nothing happen - it survives  
In the valley of its saying where executives  
Would never want to tamper.

Children are natural romantics, and identify easily with what the Shakespearean actor Ben Kingsley calls:

the sense in the lines and the very state of the  
person who is saying them.

(Mattieson, 1980)

Poetry may not make logical sense, but it does make emotional or imaginative sense. Kantor (1978), Rosenblatt (1980), Whitin (1983) and Geller (1983) all believe that a poem is a "happening" in which the listener, or in this case the reader, draws from the images, feelings and ideas painted by the words of the text which shape the special experience for the child.

#### 6.4 Developing a Vocabulary and Reading for Comprehension through the Poetry Method

As observed in 6.3.2, the meaning of poetry is intrinsic and need not be explained, but if one is trying to teach comprehension specifically from a poem, then there is a fund of material from the ballads, historical poems, social

poems, and lyrics. Vocabulary is built up and stored in the child's dictionary as difficult words are discovered week by week from poems read and from the spelling lists.

There is no need to be afraid that children will not have sufficient vocabulary to understand poetry (see Templin's assertion, p. 98, that six year olds have receptive vocabularies of between 13,000 to 23,000 words). Rinsland (Frost, ed 1969;111) found that though a first grader has what seems to be an average active expressive vocabulary of about 5,000 words, he can use all the words an 8th grader (Std VI) uses. The ones they can handle for use or for reading depend on their experience.

The remedial teacher's intention is not to test and kill the enjoyment of the poetry by dragging out a total comprehension and rehashing of the poem from the child, rather it is looking for other qualities. Donaghue (1971;310) suggests that the teacher can point out three essential elements of good poetry:

#### 6.4.1 The singing quality

*The Song the Train Sang* by Neil Adams

Now  
When the  
Steam hisses;  
Now  
When the  
Coupling clashes;  
Now  
When the  
Wind rushes  
Comes the slow but sudden swaying,  
Every truck and carriage trying  
For a smooth and better rhythm.  
For a smooth and singing rhythm.

This...is...the...one...  
That...is...the...one...  
This is the one,  
That is the one,  
This is the one, that is the one,  
This is the one, that is the one....

**6.4.2 The distinguished diction, a special choice of words**

*Beauty Queen* (Week 23) end blends

Her hair is so *silky*  
And her skin is so *milky*.

**6.4.3 Significant content**

Donaghue (ibid.) feels that poems should appeal to the intellect as well as to the emotion. Does the poem introduce new meanings to the pupil's everyday experiences?

*Seaside* (Week 24)

When we go to the seaside  
I love to explore  
The shore.  
I poke my nose all over  
The sandy slopes  
And grope  
In the rocks for sea shells....

Picking out a little vocabulary each week is limiting and devitalizing. As said, intrinsic meaning is found in the flow of the poem. Providing and picking out vocabulary seems static and boring, and often the child will comprehend and will not need a verbal explanation for everything. Britten (1970 : 162), says, and it certainly can be seen in the context of a poem, that the most powerful words are

not those with a fixed meaning such as "quadrilateral" or "potassium"  
but those with no definition out of context, such as "make", "get",  
"give", "love", "seem", "mind", "thought", etc.

*The Mosquito*, Week 12, ch sound

Watch it!  
Catch it!  
That mosquito.

Makes you itch  
When it bites...

*Old Song, New Words*, Week 19, ee sound

Haa, ha, ha, you and me  
Little brown jug how I love thee...

Using the ideas of Gray (1969 : 67), one can remediate the four  
problems readers have attaching meaning to words read. One is  
finding words that have *familiar* meaning; the second is to *expand*  
that meaning, for example:

*Mummy is Slimming*, Week 10,  
two consonants before an ending

...But I'm sipping my tonic water,  
And filling myself with fish,  
Stop begging me darling daughter,  
To eat that fattening dish.

*The Jogger*, Week 10  
two consonants before an ending

I see a jogger running along,  
Filling his lungs with air...

For example, what are the meanings of "lost"?  
*The Lost Dog*            Week 14  
                                  wh sound

Whisky is lost!  
Oh, where has he gone?  
Why did he go?  
And who is he with?...

the third problem beginner readers have is to choose from many meanings that which fits the context best; the last is to attach appropriate meaning to new words as they appear. The latter is often aided by context, e.g. children never know the meaning of "runcible" - nor do most adults, but they can hazard an appropriate meaning:

They dined on mince, and slices of quince  
Which they ate with a *runcible* spoon....

Extract from *The Owl and the Pussycat* by  
Edward Lear.

*On the Farm*, Week 16, 1 blends. Appropriate meanings are attached to:

Click-cluck, clickety-click

the meaning being offered is that:

The hen is flapping her wings at her chick.

Cling-clang, clingedy-clang,  
The cow's being milked and the pail clangs a-bang!

### 6.5 Poetry and Bibliotherapy

**Bibliotherapy:** A program of affective activity based on the interactive process of media and the people who experience it. Print or non-print material, either imaginative or informational, is experienced and discussed with the aid of a facilitator.

- Rhea Joyce Rubin

Poetry appeals to the emotions of the child, and in so doing one is applying a form of bibliotherapy. A simpler definition than the above one may be Leuner's (1973;73). He says bibliotherapy is the "scientific application of literature toward a therapeutic goal".

In poetry, we can share all that is human in our loving, living and even dying. According to Britten (1970) poetry uses all aspects of language in a spectator role - it is day-dreaming aloud, chatting about experiences and gossip. Martin, in her article on the use of folk songs for reading (1981) says that folk songs even more than poetry pinpoint people's hopes, dreams and experiences and read like local gossip columns.

One of the main concerns of the form taken in (Robinson, 1980) investigating practices in pre-first grade reading instruction, was to "foster children's affective development by providing opportunities to communicate how they feel".

In the Poetry Method, love is explored in poems on family love, love for a friend, for a pet or toy, e.g. *The Lost Dog* (Week 14, 'wh' and 'qu' sounds; *the Foam Bath*, 'oa' sound). *Living* and living space is described in poems on hygiene, dress, eating, careers, family relationships, city and country life, characters, etc (*Joan's Cough*, *Money Matters*, Week 31, 'ou'; *The Crook*, Week 33, 'oo'; *Sunbathing*, Week 13, 'th' and 'ng'; *Late for School*, Week 22, 'a-e\*'; *Drought*, Week 10, 'l' blends). There are not many poems on death for small children, but for older children the ballads and epics often tell tales of death or curses leading to death, and there are poems on the death of animals which have been hunted or slaughtered.

Our task, according to Arnstein (1970) is to discuss and air the ordinarily repressed thoughts and feeling of the child and allow a therapeutic outlet through poetry. In her classes she has found as has been found in the sessions using the Poetry Method that many restless children have become calmer; often if they come in red-faced from the playground with a headache they no longer have it at the end of a lesson. If a child walks into the session with a glum expression and long face he is bound to leave happy and smiling. Robinson (1980) used a selection of poetry to explore self-concepts and anger. Through poetry she tried three goals: identification, catharsis and insight to successfully change behaviour.

Over the weeks of lessons using the Poetry Method every child finds his or her favourite poem, and wants to read it again and again. The poems deal with fears, humour and images that are entirely nonverbal in origin. This appeal to the right hand side of the brain is the immeasurable bibliotherapy that poetry can offer (Leurer 1971). Lerner (1973) talks about how poetry helps a person discover his inner being, forcing him to get in touch with his reality. Certain children react to words or thoughts within a poem, which can set off a chain reaction of feelings. Children with learning disabilities do not have the vocabulary or maturity to tune-in to their feelings, and certain poems certainly trigger off an outpouring of ideas. Lines such as the following strike to the core of the child where they cannot voice their feelings:

...He has cursed aloud that city proud,  
He has cursed it in its pride  
He has cursed it into Semmerwater  
Down the dank hillside  
He has cursed it into Semmerwater  
There to bide...

King's tower and queen's bower,  
And weed and reed in the gloom;  
And a lost city in Semmerwater,  
Deep asleep till Doom.

Extract from *The Ballad of Semmerwater* by William Watson  
(Book 3 - "ee")

and

...They rowed her in across the rolling foam  
The cruel crawling foam  
The cruel hungry foam  
To her grave beside the sea,  
But still the boatmen hear her call the cattle home,  
Across the sands of Dee.

Extract from the ballad *The Sands of Dee* - poet unknown  
(Book 2 - "o-e\*")

Ted Hughes (1967) says that reading poetry (or writing it) like any art puts the reader (or writer) in touch with himself and allows him to connect with others. What we have to do is relate the experience to that of other people through the poetry, by doing this we build a bridge between ourselves and the poet. One may try and describe "drought" with pictures, geographical explanations or leave the child to identify with the agony of one thirsty bird:

*Drought* (Week 15) - 'r' blends

Drink a drop of water,  
Crunch a crust of bread,  
Leave some crumbs for the mother thrush  
Who brings them to the shed.

There she crams her babies  
With the crisp, dry, crumbs,  
They grip and grab and nab the grub,  
Won't share them with their chums.

The thrush flies to the water drum,  
She presses the tap, but stop!  
She's cross and crabby, is grim and gruff,  
No water! Not a drop!

How can the 'clever' teacher help the child who identifies with the feeling of uselessness?

*The Sad Scarecrow (Week 30)*

.....  
The scarecrow thinks, "I am useless now,  
For the wind has laid me low,  
And I must own  
No seeds have grown  
I suppose I shall have to go.

They'll tow me off in a wheelbarrow,  
And throw me in a heap,  
They won't allow me  
To stand here now  
If I had two eyes, I'd weep."

The following poem is a favourite with all the children. They are intrigued by the forces of good and evil incorporated into it. One child wanted it repeated every lesson, and several learnt it by heart:

*Overheard on a Saltmarsh* by Harold Munro (Book 2 - "ar")

Goblin: Nymph, nymph, what are your beads?  
Nymph: Green glass, goblin. Why do you stare at them?  
Goblin: Give them me.  
Nymph: No.  
Goblin: Give them me.  
Nymph: No.  
Goblin: Then I will howl all night in the reed,  
Lie in the mud and howl for them.  
Nymph: Goblin, why do you love them so?  
Goblin: They are better than stars or water,  
Better than voices of winds that sing,  
Better than any man's fair daughter,  
Your green glass beads on a silver ring.  
Nymph: Hush, I stole them out of the moon.  
Goblin: Give me your beads, I desire them.

Nymph: No.  
Goblin: I will howl in a deep lagoon  
For your green glass beads, I love them so.  
Give them me. Give them.  
Nymph: No.

Bryant (in Shapiro, 1969;131) says that the therapy comes from the suggestive power of the form of poetry. It can affect the mind by pure suggestion and instead of using visible or obvious imitation, it uses "arbitrary symbols as unlike as possible as the things with which it deals".

In a work of art, the feeling tone is a fusion of the activities, episodes and occurrences. The following poem has different meanings to different children and defies interpretation.

*The House in the Wood* by Walter de la Mare

I built a hut in a little wood.  
Nobody came there - nobody could  
Only a bird or a rabbit perhaps  
Only the wind with three small taps.

You'll never find my hut in the wood;  
If I can't find it, nobody could,  
For the wind one day crazy with play  
Carried my little hut away.

He didn't come with three small taps,  
He banged on the door with thunderous raps,  
Then he carried my lonely house away  
And I've searched for it now for a year and a day.

## 6.6 Illustrations and their Place in Reading for Meaning

### 6.6.1 Pro-illustrations

Studies have been done using flowing stories with meaningful content with illustrations alongside the content, and the results have shown that these enhance the semantic information given (Deneber 1976, in

[Donald 1979]). Psycholinguists are greatly in favour of illustrations as a means of arousing interest and motivating reading, because the illustrations act firstly as a means of arousing interest and a way of arousing motivation to read, besides acting as a preview to the content about to be reading - therefore making it more meaningful. Pictures also give clues to help identify words, e.g. the child is unlikely to read "horse" if he sees a picture of a "house". Illustrations by aiding the comprehension would expectedly aid the flow and fluency of the reading.

#### 6.6.2 Anti-illustrations

A study testing the hypothesis that illustrations compete with word identification for attention has been investigated by Samuels 1967, 1970 (in Ekwall 1985). He calls this the "focal attention hypothesis". Rose et al (1984) studied the effects of illustrations on isolated word reading and found that pairing these isolated words with pictures has a negative effect. This is sufficient to place the Poetry Method in the clear for not using illustrations for the *spelling* lists, but what of the poems?

Donald (1983) has found that whereas illustrations are useful adjuncts to comprehension for children who are beginner readers, those with reading ages nine years upwards find them an irritant and interference. Harber (1983) found that although illustrations seemed to be beneficial for the reading performance of normal readers, they had a detrimental effect on the performance of those children with learning disabilities or poor achievers (ibid.). Others agree with this finding -

Samuels 1967, Bram 1969, Willows 1978 (in Harber, 1983). The main problems Harber found were that pictures are often ambiguous or give the entirely wrong message or clue to content and many words cannot be explained pictorially.

The Poetry Method has no illustrations either for the spelling lists or the poems, for the following reasons:

- \* Drawings would detract from the meaning and the imagery built up by the poetic use of words and ideas imparted by the poem.
- \* They would detract from the auditory melody that is intended by poetry which is primarily an auditory stimulus.
- \* Line drawings or black and white sketches are the only possible affordable type of illustration and thus would denigrate the colour images so much part of most of the poems.
- \* Cartoon-type drawings as used in many children's workbooks and books, e.g. *Sounds Travel Too* (Mechanik, 1969); *Phonics is Fun* (Louis Krane, 1970) may be useful clues to words, but have been avoided so that attention is pinpointed on to the word shape, the visual sequence of letters and the colour coding used within each word.
- \* There are so many other orthographic details that the teacher is trying to pinpoint the child's attention towards, illustrations would tempt this concentration away from things like: eye

movements from left to right of each line, noticing the phrasal or line by line arrangement of sentences within the poem, the colour-coded phoneme of the day, stanza structure, etc.

- \* Rosenblatt (1980;386) says that a poem is a "happening" between the reader and the text, this two-way relationship or "transaction" cannot be interfered with by illustrations.
  
- \* As part of the testing of the comprehension of the poem, or for the pure joy of it the child may illustrate the poems that he likes, and had we had even black and white cartoon-like illustrations this would have interfered in the child's creativity.
  
- \* Illustrations would interfere with the actual reading process. As both Samuels 1967 and Willows 1978 (Harber, 1983) found, poor readers pinpoint on visual dimensions of the reading task (and as it is, when reading poetry he has to concentrate on relevant lines of print), so illustrations would interfere with the poor reader's use of scanning, and the manner in which he decodes the written symbols on the page. So we want to help the child to "focus selectively" (ibid.).

### Summary

If reading is meaningful, it makes the learning of reading more fun, and *boring readers* and *basal readers* have done much to destroy motivation in the early months of learning to read. Poetry has been used by many as an adjunct to

the teaching of reading, but research has shown that only Bush and Giles (1977) and Moe and Hopkins (1983) have included it as part of a *remedial* programme. It is surprising that it has not been used more, as children like poetry. Besides *liking* the expected aspects such as onomatopoeia, rhyme and rhythm, they like the brevity, humour and nonsense of some poems, the play on words, the unpredictability and even the morality imparted.

It is stressed in this chapter that the *meaning* of the poetry read is not forced on the child. In spite of its use in enlarging vocabulary, the intention is not to drag out comprehension from the content. Rather, its use as a means of bibliotherapy and a source of discovering feelings about life and death are encouraged. Illustrations, which are felt by many to enhance meaning are not used in the Poetry Method mainly because of the intangible qualities of the messages given by poetry.

## CHAPTER 7

### 7 THE USE OF POETRY AND SPEECH TRAINING AS A BASE TO A READING PROGRAMME

#### 7.1 Poetry and Oral Reading

##### 7.1.1 The need for repetition and oral practice

In the Poetry Method, poems are read/acted aloud to the child or alongside the child, he then practises them at home - reading them aloud to the family, alone in the garden against the wind, or in front of a mirror, or, as many of the children do, into a tape recorder.

The idea is to practice the poems orally, not silently. As Armstrong says (Jenkins et al. 1983;71), silent poetry is a contradiction in terms. Without the "breath of life" of oral reading, there is no poetry.

What will be learnt by this practice is adequate phrasing, voice modulation and clear enunciation, recognition of punctuation marks, flexible use of intonation through stress, pitch and juncture, how to sit and hold the book and most important of all how to make an audience listen (Zintz, 1975).

Chomsky (1968), Rushby (1974), Zintz (1975) and Anderson (1981) all encourage the use of the tape-recorder in practising oral reading. Besides being an instrument on which aural discrimination and the development of clear speech can be practised, the child can correct

himself and read the poem over and over again until it is acceptable to be kept as a record on the tape (Johnson, 1973). This erases the problem of word by word reading and "guessing in context". Schubert (1978) points out that the child can be highly motivated by listening to his reading improvement from recordings made at the beginning of the reading programme to those later in the year, and the parents' enthusiasm encourages the child as well.

It is the *repetition* of the poems that is encouraged, especially the following along of the text. Emans (1978) mentions different studies on general reading that enhance comprehension through repetition: the teacher reads stories and poems from wall posters - while the child follows. Familiar material is used and repeated to help reading (Schonell, 1965), or the pupil repeats a passage that has been dictated until he reads it fluently. The reasoning behind this repetition is that:

the child perceives the similarities in his repeated encounters, between the people in the poems, the objects and activities, and he forms a mental record of the consistent and constant features of their relationship in his memory, so that the next time he encounters them they will be recognized (Bloom and Lahey 1978;7).

This is why children enjoy reading nursery rhymes - they get to know their favourite characters better and better. According to Logan (1972;397), by knowing the material thoroughly, the child learns to

think the thought of what he is reading so he gets the meaning, absorbs it, and gives it back.

Repetition is essential to remember words. Before a pupil recognizes a word it must be seen at least a minimum of 20 times (Ekwall, 1973). The number of times of course would rest on all sorts of factors, one of which being the arrangement of content - which is one of the clues to memory offered in the Poetry Method.

### 7.1.2 The purposes of oral reading

The four purposes of oral reading listed by the *Iowa elementary Teacher's Handbook* (Zintz, 1975;354), are the chance to entertain others by reading, the security and satisfaction gained by this, the possibility of group participation, and the chance to practise speech. The latter is a tremendous problem with South African learning-problem children because there is little opportunity for drama in the classroom, and because most learning is presented in written form, with oral reading kept to a minimum. From Std III upwards, these children have little opportunity to use spoken language. They may speak to their peers but use an impoverished form of slang-infested English. Because of television and hours spent on the sports field, there may be little or no contact and verbal interaction with their parents or other adults.

Reading poetry gives children a chance to hear their own voices and an opportunity to play with words on a higher level than their general speech level. Once he can read a poem he can enjoy communicating through reading and sharing speech on a new basis.

An interesting effect of the oral reading of poetry is that it actually speeds up oral speech in children, and as it does this it also speeds up thought. Frank Smith (1982;140) says that slow speech slower than 200 words a minute is a sign that we do not know what to say or how to say it. Fluency in speech, 200 to 300 words a minute is obtained when the child has mastered a poem. So not only does this speed up comprehension of content, but may transfer to general speech practice.

The *diagnostic* value of oral reading is obvious. In oral reading those children who pretend to know what they are reading are discovered. Fluency and accuracy can be tested and those who make word substitutions, mispronunciations, repetitions, omissions, additions and reversals (Neale 1966) can be discovered. It can be seen which words the child does not know, and what clues of word attack and content he is not using, and remediation can take place immediately. If necessary new words can be discussed as they appear. Oral reading teaches the pupils that writing is a record of oral language without the tone of voice and gestured bodily movements as added clues. The intonation patterns are grasped instinctively and magically as they read and model the teacher's reading of the poems and word-by-word reading disappears. NB.

Accurate oral reading is actually a special skill (Horn & Curtis in Zintz 1975) (Dechant and Smith 1977). While he is reading, he has to change his normal pace and means of information processing to encode orally at the same time he is decoding. He still needs all the perceptual skills required in silent reading (visual discrimination,

progressing from line to line, etc.), but now has to add eye-voice span. Eye-voice span is the space between the word being read, and the one the eye is looking at - the span grows larger and larger as the oral reader improves. Goodman (in Frost 1967;18) points out that in the early stages oral and silent reading are quite comparable, as, for both

stress must be assumed, junctures inserted and pitch modulated so after re-coding for comprehension it must *sound* like familiar language.

#### 7.1.2.1 The Supra-segmentals - Stress, Pitch and Juncture

*Stress* in prose is difficult for a learning problem child to grasp. He normally has to grasp it auditorily before being taught visually, as it is the *stress* or *accent* that gives the visual image to speech. In poetry however, the stress patterns are built in and are taught by underlining or highlighting the sounds to be made louder and emphasized:

I found a little beetle, so that *Beetle* was his  
name,  
And I called him *Alexander* and he answered just  
the same.  
I put him in a *match-box*, and I kept him all the  
day....  
And Nanny let my *beetle* out -  
Yes, *Nanny* let my beetle out -  
And *Beetle* ran away....

An extract from *Forgiven* by A.A. Milne.

*Pitch*, according to Lefevere (Frost, 1967) is the low, middle and high voice and the rising and falling tone which signifies the difference in the *intent* of what is spoken. Children do not realise that they

should change pitch when a character is speaking and another is responding, and sometimes they do not even drop their voice at the end of the line. For this purpose, radio plays of children's stories and short play-poems using several characters are used.

*The King's Breakfast* by A.A. Milne has four characters plus a narrator. The children first try the role of narrator in one tone, and then learn to change their tonal pattern for the characters:

Narrator:	The King asked the Queen, and the Queen asked the dairymaid:
Queen:	(posh voice) Could we have some butter for the Royal slice of bread?
Narrator:	The dairymaid said:
Dairymaid:	(either a cockney accent, a raw South African accent, or, as one child did it, an African accent) Certainly, I'll go and tell the cow now before she goes to bed....

*Juncture* is a very necessary training, particularly for children with auditory discrimination problems. For example, 'sometimes they do not realise the separate words that go into "Wheredjago?"' (Bowren in Zintz, 1975). South African children tend to slur words together, e.g. "yesahknow", "whatchoothink?", etc.

An example of a child exposed to a new poem for reading, and seeing the function of punctuation, i.e. breaking up phrases into meaningful messages can be seen on a video filmed of the researcher teaching various children. The reader is reminded that when she repeats the poem certain inflections are required (see Lisa on Donaldson-Selby Video 1984).

...."Hey sir! Stay sir! Do not run away sir!  
If you'd let me come with you  
I'd love to if I may sir!...."

Extract from *The Goblin Man* - poet unknown

According to Zintz (1975;64),  *juncture* can be seen in the accent-discrimination when accent changes the meaning of an expression, it is the inflection that decides the meaning, e.g. "Send them aid", compared with "Send the maid".

From the remedial teaching of children with learning problems, it has been seen that children enjoy obtaining different meanings from the same thing, and 'juncture' changes the meaning of each of the following lines:

...Oh what a proud mysterious cat.  
Oh *what* a proud mysterious cat.  
Oh what a *proud* mysterious cat.  
Oh what a proud *mysterious* cat.  
Mew! Mew! Mew!

Extract from *The Mysterious Cat* - poet unknown.

and

Oh  
Oh I  
Oh I do  
Oh I do love  
Oh I do love you  
Oh I do love  
Oh I do  
Oh I  
Oh

Oh please do not kiss me  
Oh please do not kiss  
Oh please do not  
Oh please do  
Oh

Besides training in the use of all the above supra-segmentals, other purposes of oral reading are to improve pronunciation, phrasing, interpretative rhythm and flexibility. All the time the meaning and message of familiar language has to be conveyed to an audience or listener (Ammon in Musgrave 1977;190). In much later stages of silent reading, words are processed faster than the voice can articulate them. Some words are skipped and the mind re-arranges and breaks the codes of the messages on the page to obtain the essential meaning (Wikeljohann & Gallant 1979;950).

### 7.1.3 How to teach oral reading habits

As David Jackson says (Musgrave, 1977), even children with learning disabilities have a reasonable ability in reading, but because of insecurity and lack of knowledge of what is expected of them they haven't learnt *the habits of an active reader*. Reading poetry with expression and being encouraged to read a book a week will encourage a transfer of reading to other media - magazines, newspapers, and lead gradually to the willing borrowing of library books. The oral reading of the poems builds up fluency in reading and can be taught by any of the four oral reading methods suggested by Anderson (1981), which are the Neurological Impress method, echo reading, assisted reading and repeated readings.

In the *Impress Method* developed by R.G. Heckelman (ibid.) and experimented by Hollingsworth (1970), the teacher, sitting next to the child, will lead the reading, reading slightly louder and faster than the pupil while the two read *together*. The child then takes the lead with the teacher reading softly and a little behind the child. The words are pointed to just before reaching them. The pacing is important, as gradually the teacher encourages the pupils to faster rates of reading. No questioning, testing, instructing or drilling is included with this technique (Bader, 1980).

In *echo reading* the teacher reads the phrase or one line of the poem with correct phrasing and expression, and the child echoes her. The words are pointed to again, but this time the child grasps the whole line at a time. A way of varying echo reading is to record the poem. This way the pupil can first listen to the whole thing while following the written text, then he can read along with the recording (Ekwall, 1985).

*Assisted reading* is quite fun with poetry. It starts with echo reading, then the teacher reads aloud and leaves out the rhyming word at the end of a line or a stress word within the line and the child fills in. Roles can be swapped to make the child feel good. The third stage of this method is that the teacher only assists the child when he gets stuck - and help is immediate so that the flow of the poetry is not too interrupted. Flowing fluent reading is quite easy to reach with poems as they are short and easy to perfect.

Other methods are:

*Repeated reading* is a method devised by S.J. Samuels (1979) (in Ekwall 1985). Poetry is perfect for this method which involves first the practice of the poem, then his reading is timed, and the reading rate and number of errors are recorded on a chart.

*Precision reading:* emphasizes accuracy first, then speed, and is useful for helping those remedial pupils who often try and read too fast. Fortunately, most of the time the rhythm of the poems in the Poetry Method prevents this.

Gray (1969) believes there is a good deal to be gained from reading aloud, because in reading aloud one can grasp the falling tone at the end of a speech unit marking its completeness. Besides this, from the short lines and stanzas or groups of lines or verses, the child can understand "the connection between the temporal aspect of spoken speech and the spatial arrangement of print".

An interesting study on two procedures of how to correct oral reading errors was done by Jenkins et al (1983). The question was firstly whether to supply the words, or secondly, to drill the words as well. In the latter example a teacher would correct the word by supplying the correct one after a five second pause saying "what word" then waiting another five seconds. Besides giving it orally, the word was printed on an index card and at the end of the reading the child would be drilled on the corrected words. This method had a

dramatic effect on word recognition and effected a better prediction of words within the context.

## 7.2 The Poetry Method and Speech Training

Cohen and Schiller (Gerber 1981;298) point out that often children with articulation problems have difficulty detecting, locating and understanding what they are doing wrong when they say or reproduce an incorrect sound. They suggest that after practising the sound in isolation it should then be included in a nonsense syllable then in a word and finally within a sentence. *The Sound Awareness Training Programme (S.A.T.)* that these authors established (ibid. 299) has eight objectives. Amongst them are those that are covered in the Poetry Method. Their first objective is to show *where the voice comes from*.

In the first or second lesson of the Poetry Method, the child is introduced to the "definition of speech sounds" (see Appendix). They discover that sounds are articulated by using the tip of the tongue, the teeth, the lips, and the hard and soft palate. A mirror is used and the child is amazed to find out that sounds are paired, one being formed with voice and the other with air alone, e.g. b/p, d/t, etc. Zintz (1975), and Eisenson and Ogilvie (1979), stress the importance, when teaching spelling and pronunciation, of the definition of the categories of sounds to the child - the consonants, vowels and diphthongs, the latter being the blending, and gliding of one vowel with another.

Speckles (1980), reminds us of the considerable research on children's ability to segment speech, i.e. to tell where one word ends and the next begins, or to pick out individual consonants and vowels which affect spelling. Since some

children cannot segment the syllables into the units of which they are composed, they are poor readers. By listening to themselves articulate, they can learn the relationship between sound and the written letter.

For children with a second language background, and black, coloured and Indian children, sound definition is essential before the child can grasp English spelling.

Another objective of the S.A.T. is: to *heighten awareness of consonant and vowel sounds in isolation*. In the Poetry Method as each consonant is introduced the graphemic representation is presented to establish association (see Week 1), and later the vowels are introduced in a similar fashion. In their programme Cohen and Schiller (Gerber 1981) have "form-a-sound" cards showing the grapheme and its mouth formation. In the Poetry Method 'face' diagrams are used for some sounds, e.g. soft th and hard th Week 13. It is suggested in the S.A.T. that children listen to a tongue-twister loaded with the targeted sound and count how many times the sound occurs. In the Poetry Method every poem is loaded with target sounds, and although these are not counted, the words are read and compared for similarities and differences.

Poor readers have little breath control, they hardly have enough to read a sentence of three or four lines of poetry:

....  
Hark! A tap at the window!  
Tapping, tapping....  
Who can it be  
That stands without  
And who would speak with me?

*Who Was It?* Marion St John Webb

....  
This is the fool who fell in the pool  
As he caught the rat  
Who was chased by the cat  
The one that sat on a chair  
At a desk in the room  
Of the school that Jack built.

*The School that Jack Built, Week 33.*

So breath control is very much part of the oral reading training of poetry. This will certainly carry over to oral prose reading, as well as make the child more aware of phrases and punctuation.

### **7.3 The Poetry Method and Auditory Problems**

It is the usual practice for all auditory problems - those of discrimination, blending, sequencing, memory and rhythm to be trained by a speech therapist. Myklebust and Johnson (1967, : pp. 68 - 79); Parton (in Widlake, 1977 : 206) and Bush & Giles (1977) give examples of games and speech training exercises to be done verbally. The difficulty comes when remediating these problems in conjunction with reading. Parton (Widlake Ed., 1977 : 284) says

to the learning disability child this skill of hooking up an auditory response with a specific visual stimulus is extremely difficult.

Those children who cock one ear toward the speaker, who lean forward to get closer to the sound, or don't respond because they have difficulty interpreting and organizing sounds of language, have auditory perception problems (Blair,

1956). They have difficulty in learning to apply phonic generalizations and score low on the Daniels and Diack Phonics Reading Test (1969).

Because of the short phrases, and specific use of words in the Poetry Method, the following aspects of auditory training can be incorporated by the use of it, once hearing has been established as adequate.

### **7.3.1 Auditory Rhythm**

Children seem to take to poetry 'naturally' as the world around them is constantly impinging on them in new and fresh ways which they see and discover, just as the writers of children's poetry write and explore the world through the eyes of a child. As with the old nursery rhymes that have been sung for hundreds of years, there seems to be a natural appeal to the verse and rhythms of children's poems.

The first rhythms the child hears are those of the heartbeat of the mother within the uterus. Tomatis (1981) (in Levensen 1986) says that the foetus hears as early as the fourth month after conception. Among the sounds the foetus hears in utero is the mother's voice - the first relationship in which sounds of language are the medium of contact. A few hours after birth it is noticed how the infant turns towards the mother's - and father's voices. If the child's initial experiences with the sounds in his environment are positive and stimulating he will be receptive and motivated to receive information through the auditory parameter. If the mother sings to her baby and continually offers rhymes and jingles as it bounces on her lap, or

floats in a bath she will tune into the natural rhythmic inclination of the child.

Rhythm is very much part of the babbling and echolalia of the developing child. Even its first sounds and words are repeated rhythmically: "mmmm, mmmm, mmmm"; "dada, dada, dada, dada".

R. Emans (1978;939) found that as early as 1908 Huey wrote that the best introduction to reading was a book of old jingles and rhymes with illustrations and a father and mother who cared to read them aloud. Martin (1981) and (Geller 1983) say that the initial years of beginning reading five to seven years coincide with the child's induction into ritual games and chants of school-age culture. Most of the action in hopping, skipping and games such as "statues" are guided by verse rhymes and rhythms. So these game rhymes are an important part of a beginner reader's experience with language:

Eeny meeny mieny moe,  
Catch a nigger by his toe  
If he hollers let him go  
Eeny meeny mieny moe.  
O-U-T spells out and out goes HEEEEEE!

One potato, two potato,  
Three potato, four;  
Five potato, six potato,  
Seven potato, MORE.

Acka, backa soda cracker  
Acka backa boo  
Acka backa soda cracker  
Out goes you.

Auditory rhythm is intrinsic in the rhythm and metre of poetry. By having to keep to marching rhythm 4/4 time, digging rhythm 2/2

time, or the speeding up and slowing down of a train, the child speeds up or slows down to the correct beat.

4/4 Time

They're changing guard at Buckingham Palace -  
Christopher Robin went down with Alice  
Alice is marrying one of the guard.  
"A soldier's life is terrible hard."  
(2 beats) - Says Alice.

Extract from *Buckingham Palace* by A.A. Milne.

2/2 Time

Digging a trench  
From here to there  
Each with a spade  
To do his share....

Extract from *Digging Song* by J Marais.

Week 4 - a - 2/2

*Listen to the Band*

Clap your hands  
And tap your feet,  
You can dance  
To the pop band beat.

Swing along  
To the bang of drums,  
Snap your fingers  
With your thumbs....

Week 13, ng:

*King-Kong*

King-Kong springs  
 From tree to tree,  
 He's the king of the apes  
 And he's strong and free.

He's head of a gang.  
 As they swing along,  
 They hang by their tails  
 And they sing this song:

Ching-a-bang-bang  
 And a clang and a bong,  
 We are the gang  
 That belong to King-Kong!

Rhythm can be presented as a pictorial image, as in this extract from

*The Merry-go-round:*

....  
 around and round  
 and up and down.  
 around and round  
 and up and down  
 all day  
 all day.

Rhythm can be heard in the *words*:

Rowdy dowdy funny *clown*  
 Sends the crowd around the *town*  
 Around and round and up and *down*,  
 Rowdy dowdy funny *clown*.

Or a poem can contain changing rhythms:

Now  
 When the  
 Steam hisses;  
 Now  
 When the  
 Coupling clashes;  
 Now  
 When the

Wind rushes  
Comes the slow but sudden saying,  
Every truck and carriage trying  
for a smooth and better rhythm  
For a smooth and singing rhythm.

This...is...the...one...  
That...is...the...one...  
This is the one  
that is the one,  
This is the one, that is the one  
This is the one, that is the one....

An extract from *The Song the Train Sang*  
by Neil Adams.

Sometimes we clap to the rhythm of the poem and sometimes record it on a tape recorder with background vocal sound effects such as the chuffing of the train, swaying of the wind, etc. Auditory rhythm is the basis for a feeling of the music of language. By having to speed up to keep up with the beat, the child will obtain considerable courage.

The basis of rhythm and melody is good intonation giving sense to the phrases, clauses and sentences.

### 7.3.2 Auditory discrimination

This is described by Vernon (1971 : 39), as the ability to perceive those sounds that are alike and those that are different. The difference may be muddled by the child either as a beginning, middle or ending vowel, consonant or blend.

Auditory discrimination training is extremely important. Poor auditory discrimination, according to Whepman (Money, 1962), and Chomsky (1968), effects auditory perception. Children with a poor

auditory perception are those who were slow in beginning to talk and in acquiring speech accuracy, which in turn affects the development of all their conceptual behaviour and language.

The Auditory Discrimination Test (Wepman, 1958) is given to establish just what sound the child cannot distinguish.

Children with auditory discrimination problems will be poor spellers - especially on spelling and dictation tests called out by the teacher.

This problem can be remediated by the alliterative use of sounds in poetry and the rhyming endings:

Auditory discrimination of beginning consonants:

*The Goat's Lament* (Week 15 - r blends)

Bill Goat Gruff is in a huff  
Because the grass is dead.  
He drinks some broth brimful of froth,  
And crunches some crusts of bread.

Auditory discrimination of middle consonants:

*Cat and Dog* Week 10 (two consonants before an ending)

Polly had a puppy  
And a kitty, pitter-patter,  
The puppy was much fatter  
But it doesn't really matter....

Auditory discrimination of finding similar endings:

Week 9 - double letter endings:

When Jack and Jill  
Took a pail to fill  
Was there a well  
At the top of the hill?  
We cannot tell  
As both of them fell  
It would have been better  
After all  
At a waterfall.

Auditory discrimination of soft th sound only. Book 3, Week 6.

....  
Now Dorothy's moth was like any  
tattoo  
It was there, that was that, there  
was nothing to do,  
She hated all moths ever after.

Practise of the sound th as a beginning or ending sound and comparison to similar sound f/v:

Tom Thumb is *thin*, too *thin* to *thrive*,  
He has to *thieve* to stay alive,  
When he is *thirsty* and his *throat* is dry,  
He thinks of a *frothy* stream nearby.

In the winter months he li(v)es in a cloth  
And eats from a *thimble* nice *thick* broth  
Through summer he li(v)es in a roo(f) made o(f)  
*thatch*  
With *moths* and *thrushes* to share is patch.

Extract from *Tom Thumb* by Doris Emdon

Distinguishing vowels:

So she bought a bit of butter,  
Better than her bitter butter,  
And she put it in her batter,  
And the batter was not bitter,  
So t'was better Betty Botter  
Bought a bit of better butter.

*Tongue Twister - anonymous.*

Distinguishing final consonants and blends:

...When I descend  
Toward the brink  
I stand and look  
And stop and drink  
And bathe my wings,  
And chink, and prink...

Extract from *The Robin* by Thomas Hardy.

### 7.3.3 Auditory analysis and synthesis

This is the ability of the child to attack new words, sound them out by breaking them down into syllables, and to grasp the use of unstressed vowels and final consonants. Once the meaning has been integrated, it is synthesized and produced as a word (Myklebust and Johnson, 1967;148). If the child with a learning problem saw the word "enough" in isolation, or possibly even in reading context, he may not have a clue how to analyze it and re-synthesize it. The poetry rhyme guides him:

Just like all pigs you ate the *stuff*,  
Although it wasn't cooked *enough*.

Extract from *Mrs Sow Ought to Know  
Better Though* by D. Emdon. Book 3.

*Auditory Analysis*, i.e. working out new words after practice in that sound:

*Looking Smart*, Book 1, s blends

My mother is so very strict,  
She sniffs, and snaps at me:  
'You must look spick and span for school!'  
She slaps me on my knee.

After getting familiar with these from the poem new words can be worked out, e.g. stuffy, smug, etc.

Synthesis can also be trained by having to blend together nonsense onomatopoeic sounds, which appeal to the child's sense of delight in making strange sounds:

The grasshopper said  
To the bird in the tree  
"Zik-a-sik zik-a-zik"  
As polite as could be -  
"Zik-a-zik zik-a-zik"  
Which he meant for to say  
In his grasshopper way  
For the time of the year  
'Twas a VAIRY warm day -  
"Zik-a-zik zik-a-zik" -  
What a very warm day.

"Tee-oo-ee tee-oo-ee"  
Said the bird in the tree,  
"Tee-oo-ee tee-oo-ee..."

Extract from *The Grasshopper and the Bird*  
by James Reeves.

*Auditory Synthesis* - putting together nonsense words to make a sound (Book 1, week 4):

*Sambo Hates Noise*

When Sambo hears Dad's hammer  
 Go rap-rap-rap  
 And Mum's typewriter go  
 Tap, tappety-tap.

When he hears the lawnmower  
 Go rag-tag-drag,  
 And a door go  
 Slam-a-ram-dam,

Sambo goes  
 Yap-yap-yap  
 And off he runs  
 To the gap in the gate.

e e cummins does not use punctuation in his poems, so the child has to analyze and re-synthesize the sense of:

hist whist  
 little ghostthings  
 tip-toe  
 twinkle-toe  
 little twitchy  
 toads and  
 goblins  
 rustle and run  
 and hidhidehide...

Extract from *hist whist* by e e cummins

**7.3.4 Auditory closure**

Many children do not hear the last sounds of words and so do not pronounce them crisply. Tongue exercises such as "la-li-la-li" and jaw exercises "sah-seh-sah...." (dropping jaw then tightening it) are given together with the sort of poem which requires crisp endings and tongue movements.

Drip drap  
Goes the dripping tap  
Drip drap!

Flit flot  
Into the old jam pot  
Flit flot!

Plashes plishes  
Over the unwashed dishes  
Plashes plishes!

Dillery dullery  
All over the scullery  
Dillery dullery....

Extract from *The Dripping Tap* by James Kirkup.

Auditory Closure - end blends (Book 1, Week 18) - the end blend has to be pronounced for rhyme.

*Life on the Road*

Tramp, tramp, tramp!  
The hobo's got the cramp.  
He sits in a tent  
Which somebody lent,  
But his legs are terribly damp....

Clink, clink, clink!  
He mends the pans for the camp.  
He's beginning to think he would like a drink;  
He stands and starts to stamp.

### 7.3.5 Auditory memory and sequencing

Auditory memory tests short-term memory, instructions, digits, words and syllables that need to be remembered for 15-30 seconds. Together with this goes the sequence of the words or numbers.

Auditory sequencing is firstly obvious because of the meaning: A

beauty queen's hair (*Beauty Queen*, Week 28) could not be "slicky" or even "sickly", could it? It could only be "silky".

Rhyming also helps the sequence of ideas:

*Seaside* (Week 24, 'o-e\*)

When we go to the	(seaside)
I love to	(explore)
The	(shore)

Many learning-problem children mix up this sequence. By teaching a poem by the Echo Method (see page ...) and within the lesson time, teaching a short poem in its entirety for repetition, auditory memory can be trained. Rhymes and jingles are excellent for this:

Mr Knox keeps his sox  
 In a pale pink chocolate box.  
 Orange sox with bells and clocks,  
 Oh! You dandy Mr Knox.

Anon.

Book 1, Week 22 - (a-e\*): zoo, you, glare, stare, too:

*Limerick*

When you see an ape in the zoo,  
 Do you wonder what it thinks of you?  
 It gives you a glare,  
 A strange looking stare,  
 To the ape you've a monkey-face too!

### 7.3.6 Auditory verbal learning

This requires the retention of a great many more facts than is needed in auditory memory (Eisenson & Ogilvie, 1979). It requires a deeper level of sequencing - sorting out facts and retention in order of degree or in order under headings.

In the poem *The Months of the Year* by Sara Coleridge, the child has to remember the sequence of events that happen with the changes in the weather in the Northern Hemisphere in England.

January brings the snow,  
Makes our feet and fingers glow.

February brings the rain,  
Thaws the frozen lake again.

March brings breezes, loud and shrill,  
To stir the dancing daffodil....

If the child cannot remember the sequence after several readings - most do, then the poem will be learnt by heart. Learning by heart is seldom done in the Poetry Method. It is only done in the training of an auditory verbal problem or if the child, for sheer pleasure, wants to learn a poem by heart.

There are those (Coates 1983) who believe that our adulthood is lacking if we cannot recite poetry learnt in our youth. The learning of long pieces from the Bible, and traditional poetry is seldom done in schools any more. Memory and its many components should not be de-emphasized in the learning process. Thurstone in his early

research (1938) in Bush and Giles (1977;21) found *memory* to be one of the seven primary mental abilities in his early research.

### 7.3.7 Auditory reversals

This is found when a child has difficulty in isolation of letter sounds (Parton in Widlake Ed. 1977). In verse, in a case where "thorn" rhymes automatically with "worn" on the next line, it cannot be re-read as "thron". Similarly, "saw" rhyming with "claw" is unlikely to be read as "was".

Child will never say "frot" or "thort" for throat as the rhyme is the clue (Book 1, Week 37):

#### *Old Song - New Words*

A cat sat purring by the fire,  
Licking her black fur coat,  
The darling pet was quite upset  
For she couldn't reach her *throat!*

### 7.3.8 Auditory imagery

Conrad (in Kavangah and Mattingly 1972 : 207), says "if auditory imagery is a genuine biological phenomenon, then sounds of speech must be included in its definition".

If this is so, then a child can be just as hampered by a succession of auditory speech images as by silent articulation in silent reading. By helping the child to dramatize these images using oral reading, it is possible we are training a speedier auditory imagery.

Lines of poetry and lines of songs remain in the mind as auditory imagery weeks after we have read a poem. Often a child will say that he is reminded of certain lines and will recite them even though the poem was not actually learnt by heart.

### 7.3.9 Auditory distraction

Sometimes a child has difficulty with *tuning out* auditory images and other auditory stimuli. We have to train the child to *tune in* to particular stimuli (Widlake, 1977;284). In the classroom this would be the teacher's voice to which he must attend. In the one-to-one situation this is much easier, but those children with an attention deficit disorder (Lerner, 1976) even have difficulty in attending to one voice. By focussing attention to the short messages of poems, gradually, and short pieces of dictation, he can gradually transfer this listening ability to longer stories and directions.

## 7.4 The Teaching of Grammar through Poetry

One way of teaching syntax or grammar through the Poetry Method is to let children have experience in changing sentences about, rearranging the word order of nouns, verbs, punctuation, etc. and thereby to changing the sense. This gives the child the knowledge that he has the power to create new forms of language.

Fox (1981) suggests that wrong words can be included in a poem and the child can propose alternatives. For example, is the child able to hear/see incorrect nouns have been used in:

I want to go aboard my *plane*, and sail and sail away - (ship)  
 To see the *camels* a-spouting, and the *crocodiles* at play;...  
 (whales) (porpoises)

*The Dream Ship* by K. Holmes

Perhaps you would like to see if the child can make up his own ideas - then compare them to the poet's original plan:

I want to go aboard my ....., and ..... and ..... away,  
 To see the ..... a-spouting, and the ..... at play;

Part of a poem or even the whole poem can be used. Whole phrases can also be twisted and the child can correct them, e.g.

The cow all red and friendly white,  
 My love all with I heart:  
 Me her gives cream with all she might  
 With eat to apple tart.

(The friendly cow all red and white,  
 I love with all my heart:  
 She gives me cream with all her might,  
 To eat with apple tart.)

*Parts of speech* such as *nouns*, *verbs*, *adjectives* and *prepositions* can be taught step by step by leaving out one or a group of these in a poem. The rhyme helps:

I want to go aboard my n o u n and sail and sail away  
 To see the n o u n a-spouting and the n o u n at  
 play.

Extract from *The Dream Ship* by K. Holmes

Through all the a d j e c t i v e winter  
My nose has grown quite lonely  
For a d j e c t i v e, a d j e c t i v e coloured smells  
That come in springtime only.

The a d j e c t i v e, a d j e c t i v e of peach trees  
The a d j e c t i v e, a d j e c t i v e smell of clover  
And everywhere the great a d j e c t i v e smell  
Of grass the a d j e c t i v e world over.

Extract from *Smells* by Kathryn Worth.

A good way of teaching adjectives is suggested by Wilson (1982;32) taken from the Dylan Thomas *Portraits*. Wilson gives the subject such as a pet, or a person, and the child describes it, e.g.

Did you ever see my boxer?  
Flat-faced, stumpy-tailed, long-legged, vicious.

Did you ever see my stallion?  
majestically-pawing, attentively-alert, quivering-nostrilled,  
tense?

Did you ever see my sister?  
Freckle-faced, mischievously-mouthed, dancing eyed, lively?

*Associations* and *figures of speech* such as *metaphor*, *simile* and *personification* are abundant in poetry - besides poems actually teaching that aspect of language, e.g. similes in the following poem:

As fierce as a tiger - as mild as a dove -  
As stiff as a poker - as limp as a glove -  
As blind as a bat - as deaf as a post; -  
As cool as a cucumber - as warm as toast;  
As flat as a flounder - as round as a ball;  
As blunt as a hammer - as sharp as an awl; ....

As by poet unknown.

### 7.5 Punctuation and Poetry

There are those who say that punctuation in poetry is incorrect. Every line begins with a capital letter, and often there are no full stops. But if punctuation is not our main cue to meaning on the first reading as Frank Smith suggests as follows, then the punctuation of poetry should not be a problem to the reader.

Frank Smith the psycholinguist (1982;160) points out that it is not the punctuation that determines how the sentence will be read, but the reader's interpretation of the writer's intention. Question marks and exclamation marks and full stops don't appear until the end of the sentence, and commas at the end of phrases - this does not indicate "how to read it or which way to go but shows clearly where the reader has *been*."

To reinforce this idea that meaning comes first and punctuation after, one can use the Poetry Method to good advantage:

Remove all punctuation from a poem and get the child to fill it in from the way he has read it aloud (see Lisa on Video, 1984):

you re always asking questions  
 said his mum to little ben  
 it s always where which why with you  
 especially how and when

Extract from *Inquisitive Ben* by D. Emdon

and, if the child does not punctuate it correctly, you ask him to re-read it with correct emphasis then he learns that expression and punctuation are related and both are related to the meaning gained, for example, after a first reading of the following, a pupil left out all exclamation marks when punctuating the piece:

kate kate i know you ll be late  
 here is your satchel and here is your slate  
 dont go like that child your hairs in a state  
 kate kate kate

Extract from *Many Mothers to Many Daughters* by  
 Caryl Brahms

When she had re-read it and thought about how the mother might have nagged her daughter, without any prompting she wrote in punctuation equivalent to that of a poet. A more creative way of teaching punctuation is to use a poem that has not been punctuated such as the e e cummins poem *hist whist* and give the child free rein in creating something with his own stamp of meaning as the poet has not subscribed what it should be:

....  
 little itchy mouse  
 with scuttling  
 eyes rustle and run and  
 hidehidehide  
 whisk

whisk look out for the old woman  
with the wart on her nose  
what she'll do to yer  
nobody knows

for she knows the devil ooch  
the devil ouch  
the devil  
ach the great

green  
dancing  
devil  
devil

devil  
devil

wheeEEEE

### Conclusion

All aspects of oral reading, speech training and auditory training, besides the grammar rules, can be taught through the Poetry Method.

### Summary

*Oral reading* practice through reading the poems is very useful. The repetition and oral reading rehearsal required before a poem sounds correct helps memory and understanding, and gives practice in the reading of newly acquired vocabulary. Other advantages of the oral reading of poems is that the child can practice speech, enjoy communicating, use a higher level of speech and show whether he is reading accurately and fluently. He learns how important stress, juncture and pitch are to the expression of his oral reading, and how these help to colour the meaning of what is said.

The methods of oral reading taught are the Impress Method, echo reading, assisted reading, repeated readings, precision reading and drilling words that have to be corrected.

Correct *articulation* does a good deal in teaching the child the relationship between the sound and the letter and makes English phonics more explicit, especially for second language children. The Sound Awareness Training Programme of Cohen and Schiller (Gerber, 1981) includes several ideas used in the Poetry Method. They are: definition of sounds, introducing each new consonant and vowel sound in isolation and the teaching of breath control.

Many of the auditory problems usually trained only by the speech therapist can be remediated through poetry. Examples are given from the various poems illustrating each auditory aspect that can be taught. Grammar, and particularly punctuation, are taught with ease through reading poetry.

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CHAPTER 8

8 THE TEACHING OF SPELLING IN THE POETRY METHOD

8.1 Inconsistencies in English Spelling

English spelling is inconsistent. In the book *Studies in Spelling* (Scottish Council, 1961;2) for example, it is shown that because of the variation of the sounds of "i" and "ss", etc. the word scissors can be spelt in 596,580 different ways.

The sound 'i' is differently represented in each of the following words: *accede, succeed, machine, receipt, key, quay, mediaeval, Egypt, Beauchamp, Caius, feat, belief*; and the letter *e* is pronounced in different ways in *less, me, England, Derby, valet*. Some letters, which might be expected to form syllables in some words, are silent as in *business, medicine, chocolate*. We say *now* but *know*, *aunt* but *taunt*, *fury* but *bury*, *way* but *quay*, *line* but *machine*, *laughter* but *daughter*, *meat* but *great*, *base* but *vase*, *friend* but *fiend*, *thane* but *Thames*, *polish* but *Polish*.

*Studies in Spelling* (1961;2)

Bernard Shaw proved how "fish", if the "f" = "gh" as in "enough" - "i" as in "the", "o" as in "women", "sh" as "ti" in "nation" - can be spelt "ghoti", and Spenser spelt the simple (to us) word "hot" six different ways: hot, whot, hote, whote, hotte, whotte (Peters [in Widlake, 1977;309]). Be sure of it, remedial pupils could probably add "hut, het, ot or ho .

## 8.2 English Spelling is Phonetic

There are those, however (Money 1962, G. Gattegno 1969, Zintz 1975) who have found that our spelling of English is phonetic in spite of inconsistencies. Sufficient regularities exist in the phonetic system to allow the child to recognise component syllables in words to work out the word phonetically, and using the phoneme clue to classify groups of words together with the same sound in *beginning* spelling - the above quotations mainly show inconsistencies in words that a nine year old, or older, speller would encounter.

Rushby (1974 : 22) says "there are nearly three thousand sound combinations in English and one hundred and four different ways of representing the vowels, but eighty per cent of the combinations used are regular, .... and that fact alone is sufficient to justify a phonic approach".

A study by Weir and Venezky (Goodman 1973;190-191) used a computer to test the most common 20,000 English words to obtain a "structural description of the correspondence between spelling and sound". They divided words into regular phonemes, irregular phonemes, which can be predicted only by knowing the whole word in context, e.g. "chef", "chorus", and totally irregular words: "debt", "thyme" and "island". They discovered that people spell in spelling units and these follow spelling-to-morpheme rules - or little units of sound that make sense, e.g. ai, oi and ow, and gh, ph, sh, th, and clusters such as ck, dg, tch. By dividing the 84 phonemes into 40 weeks in the Poetry Method (Books 1 to 3) the child is thus learning of the derivation of spelling patterns.

### 8.3 Spelling Mistakes

When analysing the spelling of the child on his arrival at remedial lessons, the Scottish Standardized Schonell Test (10.3.3) (Schonell 1965) and the American Larsen-Hammill (1976) Tests are administered. The resulting spellings are analysed by the remedial teacher for:

**8.3.1 Auditory difficulties** such as auditory discrimination: "halp" for "help"; auditory reversals: "felt" for "left"; auditory omissions: "thunnner" for "thunder" and auditory additions: "streetsu" for "street".

**8.3.2 Visual spelling difficulties** include:

mispronunciations:	"thin_" or "f <u>i</u> ng" for "thing"
additions:	"farm <u>mm</u> er" for "farmer"
reversals:	"gr <u>i</u> l" for "girl"
omissions:	"com_" for "comb"

Those framed are also visual memory problems as he is not making use of word shape, and frequently because of poor visual memory the children mix up the visual sequencing of letters, e.g. "muoth" for "mouth".

**8.3.3 Mistakes made because of ignorance of rules**

e.g. "sity" for "city" (soft ci rule)  
"beleif" for "belief" (i before e, etc.)

**8.3.4 Mistakes due to speech related articulation problems:**

e.g. "chree" for "tree" or "three"

### 8.3.5 Typical Mistakes

There are at least ten forms of typical mistakes (*Studies in Spelling* 1961 & Donague, 1971;89) including such things as the omission of nasal sounds: "plat" for "plant", the use of "t" for past tense: "lookt" for "looked", etc. Poor spellers often miss out words, because they spend time deciding whether the word is correct, often the poor speller puts a very similar correct word in place of the word asked, unconsciously giving a word that he can spell. When a poor speller wants to hide the fact that he can't spell he will write his letters illegibly, or partially erase a word.

A study done in Michigan schools on children from Grade 1 to Grade 4 (Donaghue, 1971; 90) showed that children actually make few random errors in spelling. They found only three types of errors in spelling vowels:

1. Using the letter name instead of the *sound* accounted for 68% of all errors, e.g. "gat" for "gate".
2. Adding an incorrect vowel after a correct one: "hait" for "hat" - 25% of the errors.
3. The using of the incorrect short vowel: "spĭck" for "spĕck" accounted for 7% of the errors.

This mix-up of vowels is the reason that in the Poetry Method short vowels are taught first and long vowels don't follow until there has been nine weeks of practice using them in combination with digraphs (sh, ch, th, etc.) or blends (cr, bl, sw, mp, etc.). in Weeks 9 to 18.

#### 8.4 The Learning of Spelling

Because some children rely more on one type of imagery than another, it is best in remedial work to test each modality first, then to train as many sensory parameters as possible in the teaching of spelling.

According to Blair (1956), a child learns spelling using the message from the *visual image* - the way the word looks; the *auditory image* - the way the word sounds; from the *speech-motor message* - the spoken word; and the *hand-motor message* - the written word. Blair emphasizes that "pupils learn to spell by spelling" (ibid. 283) and there is no doubt that using the VAKT technique of using as many senses as possible when learning spelling lists and re-writing them as a test improves spelling scores. He says the four "images" used when learning to spell are

##### Instructions

- |              |   |
|--------------|---|
| Visual       | 1. Look at the word.                        |
| Auditory     | 2. Say the word.                            |
| Speech-motor | 3. Write the word while saying the letters. |
| Hand-motor   | 4. Use the word in a sentence.              |

Hillerich (1977;304) adds a few more sensory aids:

Instructions

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| Visual & Auditory                            | 1. Look at the word and say it to yourself.                           |
| Visual Imagery & Visual Sequencing, Auditory | 2. Close your eyes. Try and see the word as you spell it to yourself. |
| Visual Memory                                | 3. Check to see if you were right (if not begin at No. 1 again).      |
| Visual Memory & Visual-motor                 | 4. Cover the word and write it.                                       |
|  | 5. Check to see if you are right (if not back to No. 1 again).        |
|  | 6. Repeat steps 4 and 5 two more times.                               |

The accent on visual memory here emphasizes Frank Smith's idea (1982;80) that if we can spell well it is because we *remember* spellings. Hillerich's method may work well either with the older child who is able to monitor himself, or a severely bad speller whom the teacher can monitor, but the method is long and tedious. In the Poetry Method the child learns his spelling at home with his mother and Blair's instructions are far easier to follow.

In the Poetry Method the child *sees* the word with the sound for the week marked in colour and from word lists, and he himself finds the words containing that sound within the poem, and underlines it. He *says* the word by reading the lists and the poems. He *writes* the word and sounds out the letters aloud as he writes them or spelling and dictation, and *uses* the words in sentences, either orally, giving meaning, or in written form as a creative writing exercise, or in phonics workbook practice. So VAKT is all included.

**8.4.1 Auditory and Speech Approaches to Teaching Spelling**

*Auditory* and *speech* approaches to spelling are covered in the Poetry Method by the teaching of the articulation of the sound as it is presented (if a vowel, its place in the "mouth house"), and by the sounding out of each word that can be when writing it, e.g. h-a-b-i-t = habit, s-u-n-s-e-t = sunset. This way it is not so easy for the child to slip in extra letters, or miss out any. The only words that cannot be sounded out are trick words, e.g. "said" or words that do not follow a rule, e.g. "sure". In Book 1, from Lesson 4 to 40, there are 1,900 words that can be sounded out in this fashion, plus extra words taken from the poems. To aid auditory discrimination of similarities words are grouped by endings: flow(er), tow(er), pow(er), show(er), powd(er) (Week 30), or by beginnings: (s)ore, (st)ore, (sn)ore, (sc)ore (Week 37 - 'or').

**8.4.2 Visual Approaches**

Visual clues appear when the phoneme for the day is coloured, e.g. "cart", which aids visual sequencing, words are listed in groups of word shape:

head-tummy-head:	deed	feed	heed	
tummy-tummy-head:	need	seed	weed	(Week 19)

### 8.4.3 Tactile and Kinesthetic Approaches

The writing of the spelling words is made important in the Poetry Method. Firstly the words are printed on the especially drawn head-tummy and -tail lines so that the words are large and uncluttered by anything above or below. The handwriting is thus reinforced at the same time. Further practice of three or four Phonics Book work pages on the same phoneme reinforces spelling.

### 8.4.4 Learning Irregular Words

Irregular words are introduced in the Poetry Method in the same fashion as above but are only given to the children who have quickly grasped phonic spelling. If they are still having difficulty, then the irregular spellings are left for Book 2, or for lessons once all the sounds in Book 1 are complete.

The learning of irregular words according to Frank Smith (1982;30) can be made much easier if the speller knows that words that have similar meanings tend to be spelled the same way. For example, does "muscle" have a "c" in it - think of "muscular"; and does "bomb" have a silent "b", and "damn" a silent "m"? "Bombard" and "damnation" will tell you. The linguistic principle in spelling is that words and parts of words with similar meanings should be spelled alike. Kay (Widlake ed. 1977;312) felt that if the child's pronunciation of words was corrected the spelling would improve, e.g.: "athletic", "diamond", piano".

### 8.5 Spelling in the Poetry Method

Few rules are taught in the Poetry Method, other than the phonic generalizations, certain essential rules such as "y" changes to "i" and add "ed", "er", "est" or "es" (Book 1 - just the "-es" part is taught in Week 29) and plurals of "ay", "ey", "oy", "uy", just add "s", etc. There is conflicting research on the subject of whether rules should be taught or not.

Blair (1956) and Zintz (1975) have found rules to be unreasonable as they have so many exceptions. Cook (in Blair, 1956;84) tested the value of seven rules in high school spelling and found only "ie" changes to "y" as in "die" - "dying" was of any use. Watson (ibid.) found that bright pupils benefitted from rule-learning whereas dull children did not. Peters (Widlake, 1977;310) made an examination of 45 phonic generalizations and their applicability to a reasonable vocabulary of 5,5000 words using given to Grade 2 to 6 and drew up a list of 25 rules that were 80 to 100% applicable. The list includes all the silent letters *gh, k, w*, etc.; the hard and soft *g* and *c* sounds and many of the 'trick' rules covered in the Poetry Method, Book I. It also includes prefix and suffix rules far too complicated for beginner readers.

The systematically presented phonemes of the Poetry Method help the child to conceive the patterns of English spelling, e.g.

after short vowels (tch) is the main ending:

match, fetch, witch, pitch, ditch, Scotch, Dutch

"nch" occurs:

lunch, bunch, punch

and "ch" only turns up in five words beginner spellers use (drawn on each finger of a hand):

rich, much, such, duchess and which

The possibility of achievement is built into each spelling lesson, since all the words include the same sound and there are very few "tricks" to learn, e.g. "wreck" in the ck lesson and few sight words. A study showed that Scottish children who had been taught spelling in groups according to phonetic or structural similarities outspelled three levels (7 years, 11 years and 14 years) of their American counterparts who had learned words around interest units (Donaghue, 1971;90). Their conclusions found that applying phonic generalizations is valuable, direct instruction helps and average or low-average I.Q. children profit the most.

#### 8.5.1 Learning Spelling from Lists

The same study as above was critical of "lists" and preferred that the teacher present the words in context, as is sometimes done in the Poetry Method when the poems containing the "target sound" are used as the context from which the spelling is taken. Criticism of spelling lists comes from several sources (Rice & Thompson 1950, Horn 1955 - *Studies in Spelling* 1961;73). Hildreth (ibid.) disliked the standardized nature and rigidity of the lists and the difference in the activity of learning and practising spelling of words in isolated lists, as compared to the way they are used in written English.

Many critics are against the tedium of learning spelling from lists. A study by Margaret Peters (Widlake Ed. 1977 : 311), found that of ten classes studied, the top 25% in the sample learned from lists of some kind. The best kind of lists are those derived from the children's

needs or words drawn up by the teacher for use in free writing. However, since the ability to generalize is necessary for spelling, this is the rationale in the Poetry Method for using lists of the same sound words with added "tricks" of those sounds such as "steak", "great" and "break" when *ea* = *ay*, not *ee*. Others from whom the idea was taken are McCool & Sive (1963), Ridout (1965), Niven (1979), Martyn (1979), D'Ambrosio et al (1980), and S. Freedman et al (1980).

The lists of words used in the Poetry Method were taken from 15 different types of lists. The words chosen are those the child is likely to encounter and because they are used for remedial purposes there is a need that they be standardized. The aim is to raise the child's level of spelling so those words equivalent to the ones used in the classroom must be presented. These lists have been incorporated in the format of grading the words by class level requirements and Book 1 closely follows the Grade ii syllabus of the Transvaal and Sub B syllabus of the presentation of phonics. In the Cape formal spelling is not taught until Std. I (Grade 3). The main method used in breaking down the words follows that of Dolch who prefers letter phonics such as "ai", "ea", "oi", etc. as opposed to Spache (in Frost 1967) who likes to teach medial and final phonograms such as "and" in "hand", "ight" in "fight", giving convenient recognition of elements of words.

It must be remembered that the emphasis on phonics is *primarily* for the teaching of spelling, and *secondarily* for reading clarity.

The most useful criticism against "lists" that Hildreth (1955) mentioned was that it is unnecessary that every word has to be read or even drilled as if it is as important as its mate. So really a whole list is redundant. It is an unnecessary, laborious task learning 15 to 25 words that are already known. Another teaching task that is not useful according to Hillerich (1977;304) is that of teaching "hard spots in words, because different people have different hard spots in the same word. The following method helps the child discover his own mistakes and prevents a waste of time and over-learning (ibid. 303).

*Either:* before he even reads the list, the child can be given a pre-test with immediate correction by the child and he learns the rest that need to be studied at home this is the TEST-STUDY Method.

*Or:* the words can be sight-read by the child and immediately tested orally or written. READ-TEST-STUDY Method. The words correct are blanked out and only the remainder will be tested the following week.

The traditional way is to get the child to read over the whole list, and to ask his mother to test him at home (see Parent Questionnaire, Appendix). When the words are tested at home they are asked orally or written in lists. Writing, according to Lefevre (1970), "requires active transliteration of meaning - bearing language patterns into the graphic equivalents" - as complete sentences. He does not believe that spelling is a means of communication unless indirectly through

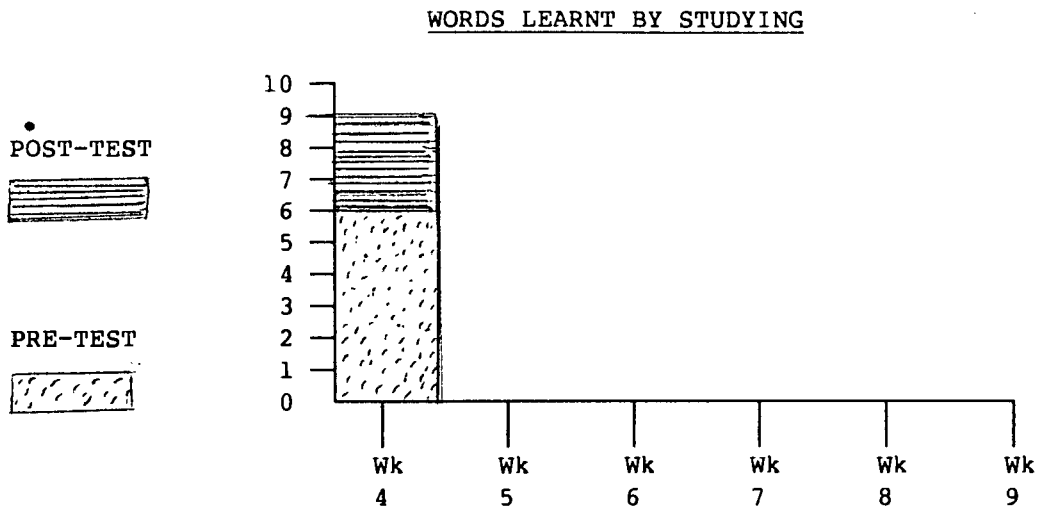
writing. So all spelling should belong to a sentence, as the "sentence, not the word is the building-block of composition". The Poetry Method follows these precepts of the psycholinguists and during the lesson the spelling is dictated in a meaningful sentence which is re-read by the child and checked before being marked. For example (Book 2):-

In the church kitchen the scholar stole a chicken sandwich, and later had a headache and stomach ache from munching his lunch so fast.

(10 spellings)

The words are marked immediately and the child writes the correction above the crossed out, incorrect one and enters it in his own "dictionary" for re-testing on a later occasion.

A very good idea of Hillerich (1977 : 304) that has been incorporated into the Poetry Method is that of a graph on which the child's record of his pre-test spelling (Test-Study Method) is marked. The children do not look at the words before the pre-test, as this may use short-term memory help. The mark for the post-test is marked on the graph to show "how many words I learned by studying":



GRAPH 1: Spelling - Pre- and Post-Test

### 8.5.2 Taking Spelling from the Context

Two methods are used here: either the child chooses those target words that he wants to learn, or following the linguistic approach of Benthuel et al 1964 (Myers and Hammill, 1969;102), he listens to the poem and identifies words containing the target sound or rule the teacher wants, and tells the letter or letter combination that spells the sound and then spells the word. For example, Teacher: "Listen for words that sound the same in this poem:

Bob, my dog got lost  
While we were on a jog,  
The weather had got so foggy  
I could not find my dog."

*The Lost Pom, Week 7*

Teacher: "What are they? Now I will read the poem again and when you hear the "o" sound stop me and spell the word" (orally or written).

It is very useful having such a short, interesting and controlled content as a poem especially written to contain useful spellings. Here is an example of five of the seven sounds of "ou" that confuse most children.

ou =    coup      oo  
         around    ow  
         mould     o  
         fought    aw  
         courage    u  
         could      oo

After the *coup*  
Louis *toured around*  
And *scouting found*  
Four thousand *wounded*  
Not *counting the dead*

The ghosts are here  
At this *hour* in the wood  
Louis certainly *could*  
Hear strange *sounds*  
And smell the *foul mould....*

With *courage* he'd *fought*  
And brought about  
A very tough *rout*  
He'd driven the *louts*  
*Out* of our town

Extract from *After the Coup* by D. Emdon, Book 3

To the question of whether the children are aware of spelling as they read, Gilbert (Widlake, 1977;307) found that with older pupils the correlation between reading and spelling was high as they were better able to spell word lists taken from books they had read, so he says there is incidental grasping of spelling from the context.

Spelling, according to Smith (1971), is not *that* different to remembering the name or object - it is a storing of a sequence of sounds, and misspellings are indicative of choice of the incorrect alternative learnt once in deliberate rule training. Smith prefers incidental learning, as our main form of learning spellings, as instead of being difficult and unproductive, it is effortless.

Lefevre (Goodman 1973;301) disagrees. He feels that spelling should not be taught alongside reading, as true psycholinguists (as he is) say that those who spell as they read are not reading, and a good speller is not necessarily a good reader and vice versa.

By including spelling patterns all the way through a poem, one is hoping that the meaning given these words will lead to incidental learning. The added advantage of using *poetry* as the context from which spelling is taken is that as Geller (1983;191) says:

Verse language, because it is built upon patterns in sound, can focus children's attention on multiple relations which govern sound-to-spelling correspondences.

For example:

The hens in the coop,  
The swallows that swoop,  
And the rooster that wakes us at dawn,  
Will be teasing the goose  
While we're hunting the moose  
And shooting baboons off the lawn.

*My Country Home* (sung to the tune of "Home on the Range"), Week 33.

There are two approaches to the teaching of spelling, the synthetic and the analytic approach.

The *Synthetic Approach* of teaching spelling from the content (Gibson and Levin, 1980), Durkin (1972) is done as follows. The child may be told to take the last word of the poem *The Daisy Chain* (Week 21: "aid") and build other words from it:

I once met a maid,	aid
Her hair in a braid....	maid
	braid
I tried it and failed,	laid
"I'm clumsy!" I wailed,	
The maid had to give me	
Some help and some aid.	

He can check himself by referring to the poem afterwards.

The *Analytic Approach* to spelling takes the whole word and contrasts it with similar words, and the difference is analysed (Daniels and Diack [1969], Southgate and Roberts [1980]). It is taught by reading the poem, marking the sound to be found and grouping words with similar endings:

Emmeline, was not to be seen  
For more than a week.  
She slipped between the edge of the trees  
At the end of the green....

Emmeline! Emmeline! Where have you been?  
Why, it's more than a week!  
Emmeline said "sillies I went to see the Queen  
She says my hands are *purfickly* clean.

Extract from *Before Tea* by A.A. Milne.

Same sound:	seen, week, between, trees, green, queen, been
Same ending:	seen, green, been, queen
Opportunity for comparison of three sounds of ee:	Emmeline, clean, green.

In this particular poem there is the opportunity of taking the incorrectly spelt word "purfickly" (poetic license), seeing firstly if the child recognizes it as wrong, and then correcting it.

### 8.6 The Role of Parents in the Poetry Method

The usefulness of parents as part of the Poetry Method cannot go unheeded. They supervise the spelling done at home, and are required to listen to reading from books and poems, and help with the phonics pages - all of which help speed up the programme.

It must be remembered that the Poetry Method was initially used on private pupils, children of the middle and upper-middle classes (cf. Newson 1977) section of a Johannesburg community whose parents were most ambitious for the academic future of their children. Since they were paying a considerable amount for the lessons they were prepared to spend time helping them at home as well.

Burns (1982;372) Belcher (1984) and Webb et. al (1985) have shown that parents involved in experiments in which they gave encouragement and praise, brought

about improvements in the self-concepts of their children, as well as improvements in their work.

Parents help to speed up the programme dramatically as they work as aid-tutors - as did the "proctors" in Keller's PSI Individual Teaching Programme (Keller, 1969). Proctors and parents have equivalent uses in that both allow for repeated testing and unavoidable tutoring as they explain parts of the programme (e.g. phonic work-pages and vocabulary not understood). They can add their own shaping of learning behaviour and they prompt consistent progress throughout the course. Motivation from such important specialized others in the life of the child can be powerful.

Most remedial teachers disagree with sending work home - as do class teachers. Both in the Transvaal and the Cape no homework is allowed to be sent home until Std II (Grade 4). A questionnaire sent to 150 private practitioners of SAALED in 1982 and answered by 85 showed that only 10% sent any work home. Their reasoning was that the parent as teacher tends to be neurotic and a negative relationship - already there because of the child's learning problem will very likely be built up. They felt the parent should be a parent, not a teacher. Over the years of sending work home there have been only a handful of parents who grew so frustrated over the homework that they have telephoned (usually at dinner time) in screaming frustration. The suggestion has always been that they immediately drop all homework and hand the responsibility over to the child - and this has worked well as the child knows he will be rewarded for all work done. Occasionally the father has volunteered to supervise the homework, probably recognizing that he has a more patient helpful manner with the child, but this is rare.

Webb et al. (1985), found, after comparing studies in Britain and America, that after parental participation in reading programmes the measured reading ability of the child involved increases far beyond that of control groups. A study is at present (1987) taking place in the school for learning-disabled and CP children, Vista Nova in Cape Town, encouraging parental involvement in reading, and favourable results seem to be appearing.

It has been found in the Poetry Method that if the parents are made fully aware of their part in the programme in the beginning, they enjoy the responsibility, and once they realize that learning-time can be a warm, interesting time, and not anxiety-provoking, it transfers to help with other class-work that the child may need. The following ideas are suggested to parents:

1. A special private time (that does not encroach on TV or sport/play time) and quiet place is suggested. Sometimes a timetable is drawn up indicating to parents and children who are "too busy" or "too tired" just how much free time they do have available each day for homework.
2. Praise and encourage the work of the child - not the child himself, i.e. instead of remarks such as "you are bone lazy and impossible today", rather "you don't seem so interested in the work today, let me help you - or let me do some, then you do some". It often helps to have a clock in front of the child, and see if he can "beat the clock".
3. Reading together is suggested (Impress Reading, see p. 134). While doing this the parent is encouraged to ignore mistakes. The child will read words correctly once the parent has read it. This reading together is suggested for 10 to 15 minutes a night.

4. Questions are asked on the content of the story, or the story is discussed - as may be the poem if it is a poem that is being read.
5. Sometimes alternating reading is encouraged - alternating sentences, paragraphs or characters. This works well with the poems.
6. Predicting what will happen next is suggested.
7. The parents are encouraged to read aloud from other books to the child, and to take him to the library, let him listen to taped stories, help the child record his own reading, but most of all they must show that they read themselves and have books and magazines around the house.
8. Once the child has read through his list of spelling words once or twice the parent can ask him to write down several which are marked immediately and corrected by the child (see Parent's Questionnaire, Appendix 80% of the parents did this once or twice a week).
9. The children are encouraged to do all phonics pages on their own - as only if the remedial teacher sees their mistakes can she help them. In this exercise the parents realise that mistakes can actually be useful clues. As can be seen on the children's questionnaire (Appendix), 40% of those who replied like the phonics work-pages best of the whole Poetry Method so they are highly motivated to work on them alone.

Webb et. al. add to their parental suggestion list (1985;90) synonym games and vocabulary games to help make words into an enjoyable part of life.

Belcher (1984) found that the benefits of involving the parents include the following:

- \* The parents are able to appreciate the progress their children are making.
- \* They grow less impatient and frustrated with the child and grow more interested and enthusiastic - as do the children.
- \* They will not feel as if they are paying out towards something from which they are excluded.
- \* The parent will talk more freely about problems that they have with their children or home life which may affect the child's schoolwork.

As can be seen from the positive enthusiastic comments of the parents' questionnaire (Appendix), the co-operation of the parents is a most exciting part of the Poetry Method.

### **Conclusion**

Teaching spelling in the Poetry Method through lists and from similar sounding words within the poems using a VAKT approach appears to be successful. Using parents to help with work at home has proved successful.

### Summary

Although it seems that English spelling is inconsistent, findings are that there are many more regularities than expected. An analysis of spelling mistakes includes problems such as auditory and visual difficulties, problems due to rules, bad speech, using letter names instead of sounds, adding extra vowels and using incorrect short vowels. The learning of regular and irregular words are best taught using Visual, Auditory, Kinesthetic and Tactile (VAKT) senses.

In the Poetry Method words are grouped according to their sounds, which appears to be a proven way of grouping words for spelling-learning. The pros and cons of spelling lists are discussed, and Hillerich's (1977) excellent idea of a *pre-test* removes the problem of the child having to learn many words he already knows.

Rather than teaching from lists, one can take words from the content of the poems. The *synthetic* form of this is building up similar words, and the *analytic* method is to take a whole word and contrast it to similar sounding or patterned words. Both ways are useful.

*The Parents* take an important role in the testing of spelling in the Poetry Method. Although many remedial teachers are against sending work home, and the policy of Provincial Education has been to leave all homework until Std. II (Grade 4), studies have found that most parents willingly help their children. Ideas are put to the parents of the children using the Poetry Method on how to help with homework, and the results from those questionnaires returned show that the parents were quite happy to be involved in speeding the programme along its way.

## CHAPTER 9

### 9 THE PSYCHOLOGICAL BASIS OF THE POETRY METHOD

This chapter will consider reward, motivation, transfer and the role of the remedial teacher as a source of this reward.

#### 9.1 Why the Need for Reward?

The children who arrive for remedial help are those who seldom if ever get positive mention or "stars" in the classroom situation. Reward in the classroom is, when given, intermittent. This is because of large numbers of children, and inattentiveness to the needs of the individual when the child is behaving properly, so the opportunity for reward is lost.

The pupils are often the type of children - hyperactive, nervous, fidgety, clumsy or badly coordinated, who receive little positive appraisal at home. If they have received reward, tangible or otherwise, it is usually unrelated to anything academic. Reinforcement is often the attention given to the child when he is naughty. This would be sufficient if, as is the case with most of the children with learning problems, there were not a sibling - older or younger - who pleased his parents and grandparents immeasurably with school performance and against whom the remedial pupil compares himself.

Children like to be rewarded and will enjoy the sessions. The positive aspects of the one-to-one remedial lesson will and do carry over to the macrocosm

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classroom learning experience. Many of the children feel hated by their teachers and in turn distrust them. By building up a relationship with a rewarding remedial teacher giving verbal, gestural and material reward, this will carry over to the school by the "reciprocity principle" and "positive transference", and the child will feel better about all teachers (Keller, 1969), (J.L. Freedman et al, 1978), (Logan, 1970), (Belkin, 1977).

## 9.2 The Poetry Method as a Means of Motivation

The Poetry Method is highly motivating judged against psychological principles. It contains the three ingredients of the learning triangle - the *task*, the degree of *teacher control* and the *reward* - all of which according to Hewett 1968 (Macmillan 1973) must balance each other. The following reasons accentuate why the Poetry Method is such a motivating method:-

- \* Because the method is different to those used in the classroom it stimulates the "epistemic curiosity" of the child. This according to Vidler (Ball Ed. 1977;35) is a secondary sort of curiosity to perceptual curiosity - the usual state of conflict normally relieved by additional information. Epistemic curiosity places existing thoughts and beliefs in conflict by posing them with a surprising situation. Reading poetry is something he has not yet met up with. Because poetry represents the *mysterious*, the unknown even the *chaotic, unorganized and unexplained* (Maslow, 1970) as such it assuages boredom and remotivates.
  
- \* The Poetry Method is based on the Behaviourist Model, and includes the varied reinforcement schedules shaping new behaviour. The method follows

Skinner's 1954 ideals of successful teaching. These are: that firstly the pupil must be placed in a position where he can respond correctly. The material has to be presented in small amounts and in sequential order - as per the week-to-week system. Immediate feedback is given and individual work is monitored at every step (MacMillan 1973;10).

- \* In the classroom, teachers usually use variable schedules presenting reinforcements after "enough has been done" (ibid.;98). In the one-to-one remedial situation there is no task that has to be completed alone, the heavy feeling of having to complete work is not part of the lesson, the teacher and child share the load and the child still receives reward.
- \* The motivation inspired in the remedial session, together with this new courage and ability in reading and spelling transfers to other learning situations.
- \* Punishment is to be kept to a minimum according to Skinner. There is no need for punishment at all in the Poetry Method.
- \* The one-to-one situation is a setting for therapeutic growth, and a situation for building up a new feeling of self-esteem.
- \* The new relationship formed with a teacher carries over to other educators, and instead of possible fear or insecurity, a new sense of trust can be built up.
- \* The Poetry Method draws out what the humanistic psychologists Rogers, Combs, and Maslow call the most desirable form of motivation - that

which comes from the individual himself. The child works more and more willingly at home preparing the poems and phonics.

- \* Because the Poetry Method is a learning and *performing* situation, there is a *good* deal of interaction between the pupil and teacher. Often this develops into a lively interchange on points of interest to the child, and which could become important to the teacher if she is prepared to allow wholehearted involvement. Keller (1969) found this sort of interchange essential for his PSI Instruction System, which at its base as in the Poetry Method follows the principles of reinforcement theory of the behaviourist model.

### 9.3 The Reinforcement Theory of the Behaviourist Model

The main thrust of this thesis has been to discuss the stimulus or *presentation* of the Poetry Method. The *response*, or performance expected from the pupils has been included. Now, the third major component of instruction *feedback* according to Gage (1976;140), or *reward* according to Hewett (Macmillan 1973), is discussed.

In the Poetry Method praise and reinforcement is given immediately initially, and failure is corrected as soon after the incorrect action as possible, so that it can turn into a reaction that can receive positive reinforcement Keller (1969). The behaviour learnt by this continuous immediate reinforcement usually ceases quickly when the reinforcement is no longer offered. However, in the Poetry Method, intermittent reinforcement gradually follows this initial continual

reinforcement given for the establishment of initial learning so the behaviour will be likely to persist (Krumboltz, 1972;28).

*Extrinsic* material rewards are given in the form of ticks for correct work, stars for each phonic work-page and for spelling as long as there are no more than three mistakes. If the work is incorrect, e.g. "gril" for "girl" it is immediately corrected and the incorrect word is crossed out negating it. A large "C" for correction is written (no crosses are seen). Allowing up to three mistakes follows the Successive Approximation Principle. This principle implies that a teacher does not have to wait for a behaviour to be perfect before supplying reinforcement. Any tendency to improvement must be reinforced (Krumboltz, 1972;21). This principle can be applied in remediation to the extent that even if the child improves parts of a word more sensibly, he can receive reward, e.g. from "flo(ua)" to "flou(er)". So gradually the correct behaviour is being "shaped" (as Skinners pigeons) towards the correct expected behaviour. Every time the child has 15 stars in a section of his star chart he is given a small prize. This steady and reliable rewarding on a fixed ratio schedule (Macmillan, 1973;98) is most reassuring and builds up a feeling in the child that he can trust the teacher's *response behaviour* - if he works he will be rewarded - even though he may not yet have grown to fully trust her.

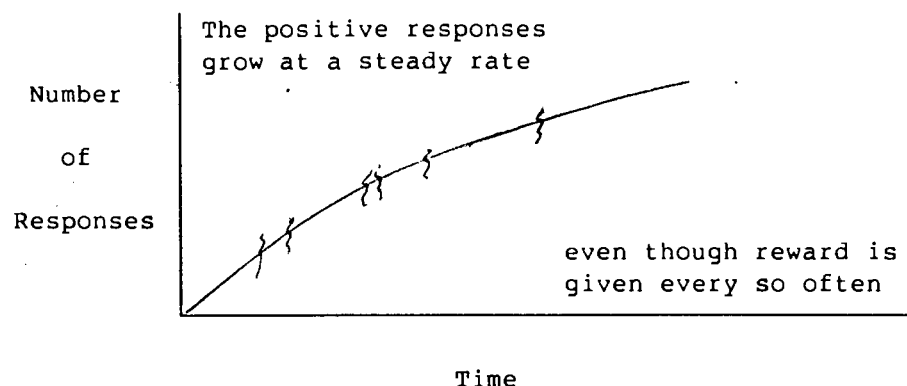
An interesting point of note here is that a questionnaire completed by 85 private remedial teachers part of the Johannesburg Private Practitioners Group of SAALED indicated that only five of them gave any form of material reward systematically. Some had "sweets and biscuits for the children to help themselves". Of the five, two had a system whereby the child built up points, and when he reached a certain number of points the *parents* would buy something the child wanted, e.g. skates or a soccer ball.

Symbolic reinforcers as motivators include the certificate awarded at the end of the programme (see Appendix). In the classroom situation symbolic reinforcers include reports, trophies and medals or badges that the remedial pupil is very unlikely to receive. The argument that the private practitioners gave against the above forms of material reinforcement was that the children seem sufficiently satisfied with verbal reward and gesture. As the programme progresses in the Poetry Method the fixed ratio schedule for correct reading and spelling makes way for fewer stars being awarded and more verbal comments, and reassuring touches and caresses on their own.

Verbal reward is given in the form of comments: "mmmm!", "Oh!", "OK!", "Yes!", "Wow!", "What do you know!", "There is some good reading going on here today!", "Good spelling!", "Beautiful!". The remarks "good boy" or "good girl" are never used so that the comments are pinned onto the *work*, not the *child*.

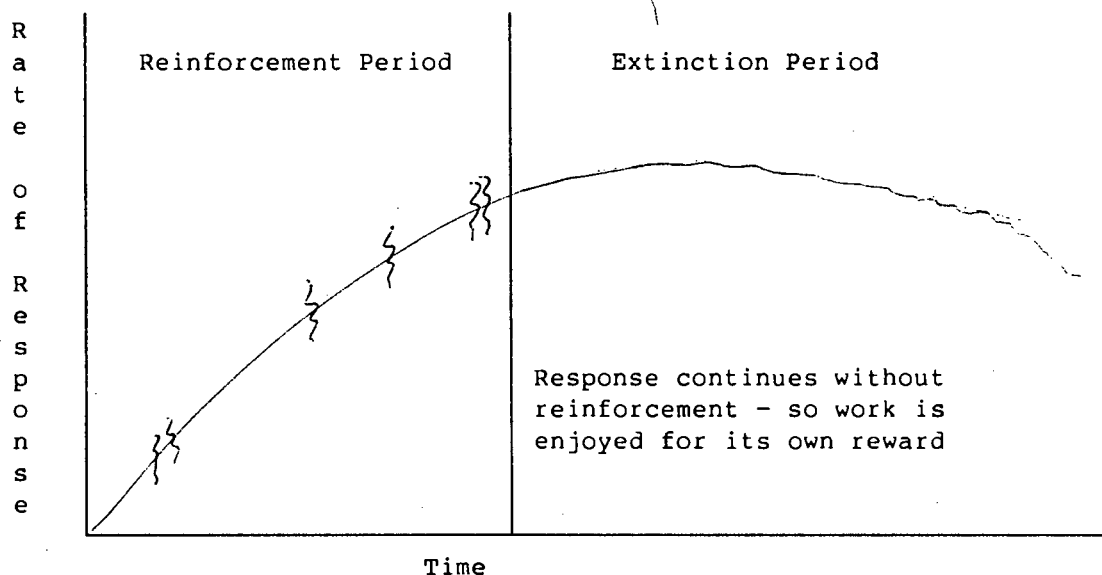
Non-verbal reward is given by eyebrow lifting and smiling, nodding and grunting and occasional hugging and touching of the child's arm or hand (if he is amenable to this - some children are touch sensitive). These forms of reward are most effective if sincerely given.

Gradually the reward takes the form of a *variable* ratio - given for every few desired responses. This form of schedule develops behaviour that will continue even in the face of failure, as it is highly resistant to extinction. See Graph 2 (Macmillan 1973;108).



GRAPH 2: THE TYPE OF PERFORMANCE ON A VARIABLE SCHEDULE OF REINFORCEMENT

Extinction of behaviour on this schedule proceeds with gradual rates of responding without abrupt pauses (Reynolds [in Macmillan, 1973;109]).



GRAPH 3: EXTINCTION ON THE VARIABLE SCHEDULE OF REINFORCEMENT

By giving compliments at odd intervals they gain in meaningfulness. With the weaning away of continual reward the children learn to enjoy and do the work for its own reward.

#### 9.4 The One-to-one Tutoring Situation

The quiet, private, one-to-one setting of the teacher and child is likely to be a unique situation for him. There are seldom times when a child is alone for an uninterrupted half hour with his mother or father, let alone a teacher. This period of time is therapeutic, and there is the opportunity for the teacher to offer the child everything that according to Rogers will bring about a *change in his attitude to himself* and to his work. The conditions to bring about this therapeutic personality change are empathy, positive regard and genuineness (Burns 1982;366).

The reward given is not the total non-judgmental attitude according to Rogers, because unfortunately a certain standard of output is aimed at, but it is totally positive and encouraging. The child is praised, reaffirmed, hugged and responded to, to make him feel worthwhile.

The Rogerian counselling ideas are used, in that the child is taught that in the work he produces, his *behaviour* is separate from his *person*. In the one-to-one situation, he is made to feel good about himself as a person, quite apart from his work, i.e. he is a bad speller but not a bad boy. This, according to Rogerian theory, is what brings about *changes in behaviour* (Brammer and Shostrom, 1977).

Although this study has been to prove the worth of a 'method' in the training of a remedial pupil, the researcher is strongly of the feeling that it is the closeness, trust and love built up in the one-to-one relationship that brings

about the *healing* of the child. It is the recognition by the teacher of the beauty within the child, the letting free of his individual uniqueness and the allowing of his freedom to be.

In order to help the realisation of the best potentialities in the pupil's life the teacher must really *mean* him as the definitive person he is in his potentiality and his actuality, more precisely he must not know him as a mere sum of qualities, strivings and inhibitions, he must be aware of him as a whole being and affirm him in this wholeness. But he can only do this if he meets him again and again, as his partner in a bipolar situation.

(Martin Buber, 1958;132)

Although a Flanders interaction analysis has not been done, it would very likely compare to David Moseley's analysis of classroom interaction, as follows (Waklin 1982;163):

Teacher Asks Questions:

These would be based on teacher's ideas on content - Classroom : 10%; One-to-one : at least 20% (+10%)

Other Teacher Talk:

Initiation (this goes with the questioning)

Lecturing - teachers own ideas in Poetry Method kept to a minimum

Giving directions - orders and comments kept to a minimum in the Poetry Method

Criticizing or justifying authority - never necessary when using the Poetry Method.

Response:

Accepts feelings - accepting and clarifying positive or negative feelings, also predicting and recalling feelings (throughout lesson)

Praise or encouragements - praise, jokes and non-verbal and verbal acknowledgement (throughout lesson)

Accepts or uses ideas of pupils - clarifying and building - Classroom : 30%; One-to-one : at least 50% (+20%)

Pupils ask questions: Classroom : 5%; One-to-one : at least 10% (+5%)

Other pupil talk:

in response to teacher, wherein freedom to express his own ideas is limited in the classroom, in the one-to-one situation he has total freedom  
Pupil-talk-initiation - expressing own ideas, new topic, etc., anything beyond the structure of the lesson (this improves over months of the programme) - Classroom : 20%; One-to-one : at least 39% (+19%)

Silence or Confusion:

in which communication would not be understood by observer - Classroom : 15%; One-to-one : hopefully only about 1%

Student-teachers are encouraged to give more time to teacher *response* rather than teacher initiation, and to encourage *pupil* initiation. It is for these reasons that, ideally, remediation should be given on a one-to-one basis.

The teachers learns from hour to hour to find practical answers to important questions. Who puts these questions? It is the child himself. And so the most important thing is to learn to read the child....

....A great power of love and unselfishness is of course necessary when it is a matter of individual treatment in every case. The most essential thing to perceive is the harmony between the child's spirit, soul and body. ...Insight, perception, observation - these are what the teacher needs first of all. Quite instinctively he will carry over into his practical teaching in an artistic way what he has learnt....

(Rudolf Steiner, 1928, 105 and 191)

Others who are strongly in favour of tutoring include Rosenshine and Furst (in Gage 1976;135) and Keller (1969;114). These authors recognize that tutoring increases the effectiveness of conventional teaching when specific cognitive areas are trained as a supplement to class teaching. The self-pacing of the child is the most useful aspect of tutoring, as well as the continual spontaneous

reinforcement and rewarding feedback telling him that he is something more than the negative self he is usually labeled in the classroom situation.

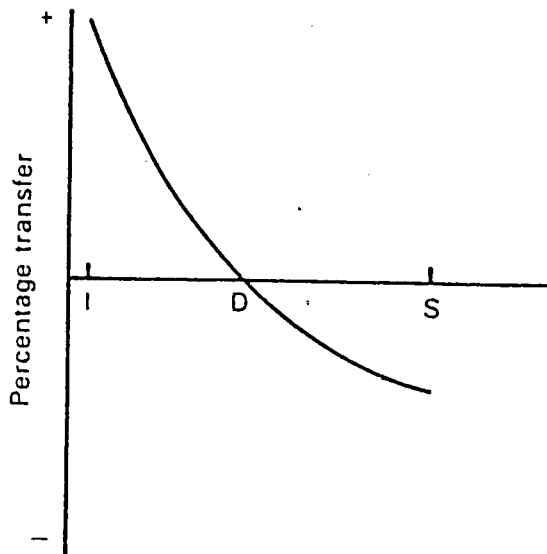
In some circumstances however, Rosenshine and Furst (Gage, 1976;135) say that tutoring is less effective than conventional class teaching. The Plowden report of 1984 (Dowling and Dauncy, 1984;114) states that individual work only allows the teacher little time to work through difficulties superficially, and doesn't give enough opportunity for children to learn from one another, or to be able to show off in front of the others and achieve some acclaim and peer acceptance.

#### **9.5 Transfer of Learning and Improved Self-concept**

The good feeling about himself, his work and his feelings toward teachers should transfer to his classroom quite naturally through Thorndike's Law of Effect. This states that the child will continue searching for the pleasant consequences received in the remedial situation, elsewhere (MacMillan, 1973;54). The child has actually brought negative transfer with him into remedial situation. His bad feelings towards learning will be seen in initial fear or disinterest.

According to Zimmerman and Allerbrand (1965) in (Burns 1982:231) bad readers actually stop trying. After studying just as hard as their peers and still failing, they feel most inadequate and embarrassed, so much so that reading achievement is then avoided, and so the humiliation that may accompany it. According to Walkin (1982;195) for positive transfer to take place, the training received in the remedial situation and the build-up of self must assist the child to acquire

the classroom tasks. Maximum positive transfer of knowledge takes place when the new task is similar to those previously learned.



**GRAPH 4: SHOWING PERCENTAGE TRANSFER OF TRAINING BETWEEN TASKS X AND Y**

- Key: + Everything above the line shows positive transfer of training
- Everything below the line shows that there is not any transfer
- At I The tutoring tasks are identical to class tasks
- At D Tasks X and Y are completely dissimilar
- At S Tasks taught in a tutoring situation are taught confusingly and in a totally dissimilar fashion.

To prevent negative transfer the work in the remedial situation should be as similar in *response* expected, i.e. in the layout, writing, marking, etc., as the work in the classroom.

Since the Poetry Method is teaching straight from the same ordered *syllabus* as the class teacher in spelling, phonics and oral reading, the reading/spelling tasks are not dissimilar. Because the remedial lessons will have identical

elements to the class lesson, positive transfer should firstly occur due to the "Identical Elements Theory" (ibid. 196). Secondly principles of spelling and reading are being taught in the Poetry Method that can now be applied to a variety of problems so transfer through the "Principles Theory" will result in positive transfer. If the child sees that his class-work is becoming easier, that he can carry over rules learnt in one situation onto another, and that he can take control so will his self concept improve and he will receive *intrinsic* reward.

Merely by looking at the following drawings of a child without seeing the score from the Dale Harris Goodenough version of the Draw-a-man Test, one can see that the second drawing done after only 12 remedial lessons shows a larger, more detailed and obviously more masculine drawing showing quite a growth in body image and body concept.

DIAGRAM 1

Before Remedial Programme  
C. Age = 6 years

After Remedial Programme  
C. Age = 6,5 years



18 = 75



19 = 98

Transfer of learning in the Poetry Method can be seen when the child, quite unsolicited, expresses his feelings for poetry, brings along a poem of his own, or shows he is reading books, magazines, adverts, etc. without having to be urged to do so.

#### 9.6 The Role of the Remedial Teacher and Reward and Transfer

The characteristics of the remedial teacher have a good deal to do with the feelings of worth the child receives, and the speed of transfer.

The teacher should be compassionate, tolerant, and unsparingly beneficent. In the absence of such a relationship the one cannot receive any inspiration or upliftment from the other. Development depends more on inspiration than on instruction.

(Swami Satprakashananda, 1965;267)

Maslow's self-actualizing person is deemed to be the most successful type of teacher (Burns, 1982;255). This balanced intact, personality type offers more of a growth promoting atmosphere than those who do not have a spontaneous democratic nature combined with a confident adjusted positive view of themselves.

The Newsoms in their book *Perspectives on School at Seven Years Old* (1977) found in their interviews with parents of 700 children in the Nottingham area that again and again the children wanted and liked teachers who were flexible, sensitive, and responsive and those who have the ability to get to know the children individually. The teacher's role, according to the Newsoms (p. 41) is to identify herself with the school, and to cause the child to do so. The remedial

teacher will help this along by acting as a bridge to the class situation. The child will identify with her while he is enjoying and being successful in reading and spelling

- > this will lead to identification with the class teacher and a liking of class work,
- > and this in turn will lead to an identification with and a liking of school.

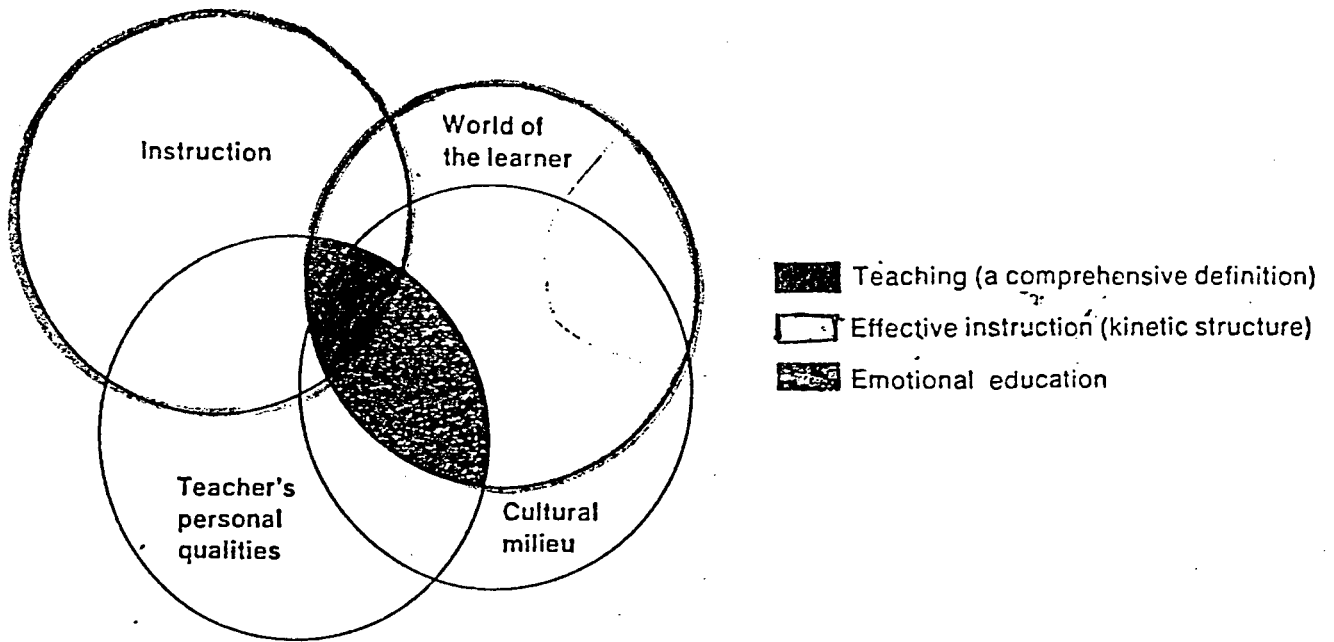
If the child has to cope with a really unsympathetic class teacher or has to adjust to a series of teachers in a short space of time, then the stability and continuing presence of the remedial teacher remains a pivot from which the child can function.

The teacher should always have the pupil's well-being in his heart. His blessings, his disinterested love, and his parental solicitude for the pupil's good, serve as uplifting forces ....

(Swami Satprakashananda, 1965;268)

Knowing that at least his remedial teacher is on his side, the child can take her honesty and truthful comments about his achievements and failures. He can be helped to face reality through her supportive aura of acceptance and warmth. This confrontation is necessary for an accurate view of self (Burns 1982;245).

Belkin's model for the correcting reading of children shows how the teacher's personal qualities actually intrude on the world of the learner more than does the effective instruction.



**DIAGRAM 2: BELKIN'S (1977;325) MODEL FOR THE CORRECTING OF READING OF CHILDREN**

Note how the No. 2 area - that of the teacher's personality encroaches on the pupil - the world of the learner.

Krumboltz (1972;19) says that the person - here the remedial teacher - who delivers the reinforcer to a child may be as important as the reinforcer. The child firstly understands the remedial teacher has special skill and knowledge, and is recognized by others as important and influential beside being attentive, kind and loving to him. If the child knows that at least his remedial teacher is on his side, he can take her honesty and truthful comments about his achievements and failures. He can be helped to face reality through her supportive aura of acceptance and warmth. This support is necessary for an accurate view of self (Burns, 1982;245).

The remedial teacher has the opportunity of getting to know the pupils better than any class teacher could. As mentioned, if the child is obviously angry, depressed or unhappy when he arrives for a lesson, the teacher can give the

programme of the Poetry Method for that day as homework, and then spend most of the lesson time dealing with his emotional state. Lawrence (1973) in (Burns, 1982;374) is most adamant that settling down to the mechanics of reading when the child is actually in need of empathetic counselling is a total waste of time. If there is a warm relationship and if the teacher can show she is more interested in the child than in the books, poetry and spelling, the child's self-image will improve, and the child will regain his curiosity for learning.

Student teachers teaching the Poetry Method are encouraged to use preliminary tests diagnostically and not to label the child as a poor reader because his scores indicate one or two years below average. An introductory letter (Appendix) is given to parents as an indication of the positive thinking involved and an attitude of expectancy. This follows Purkey's [(1970) in (Burns 1982; 228)] idea of a self-fulfilling prophecy. This says that once the child becomes aware of his potential as a better reader and speller, and is treated as someone capable of managing a form of self-fulfilling prophecy, he carries this through.

Purkey (1978) (ibid.:232) says the self-fulfilling prophecy actually invites the pupil, through formal and informal, verbal and nonverbal, conscious and unconscious ways to see himself as able, valuable, and acceptable. The pupil proves to be influenced by the way the teacher responds to him, and the parents - and their expectations will effect the direction of the remedial programme (Burns, 1982;229) and Kaslow (1984).

The conclusion that is drawn from 13 years of one-to-one teaching in the remedial situation is that children will improve if tutored. The results that follow show this as a fact. Part of this improvement may be solely due to the

Hawthorne effect of sudden interest displayed in the child which automatically will affect his motivation and ability.

Another part of the improvement is that of taking a positive thinking attitude to the problems presented with the child. The researcher often shelves away past tests and reports and refuses to take for granted the negative comments that are sent by teachers and testers along with the child's arrival. The initial interview with the parents and the first letter (see Appendix) all encourage the parents to join in with reviewing the child and his problems positively.

A positive thinker does not refuse to *recognise* the negative, he refuses to *dwell* on it. Positive thinking is a form of thought which habitually looks for the best results from the worst conditions. It is possible to look for something to build... And the remarkable fact is that when you seek good, you are very likely to find it.

(N.V. Peale, 1959;9)

The experience of bringing a child from the state of depression and failure, to one of happy motivation is extremely satisfying both for the remedial teacher and the child. This feeling surpasses the power or clever organization of any structural processes and methods that may statistically achieve this state.

Some of the least likely student teachers still managed to obtain good results using the Poetry Method, which, of course, is no measure of their worth as patient, nurturing, interested remedial teachers. As I have watched students teaching on a one-to-one basis, I have seen impatience, brusqueness, detachment, students who don't respond quickly to the child, others who have added screamingly boring things to the Poetry Method such as flashing meaningless Dolch phrase words (see Appendix) on the advice of other lecturers, or acting

as monotonous models - yet none of this seems to affect the overall re-testing results. A further study would have to be done to ascertain the long term change such behaviour would have in the pupils' behaviour.

On the other hand, some of the young student teachers aged only 21 years have shown a sensitivity and depth of relationship that is beyond all expectation of one of their age.

The use of fourth year student teachers for experimentation with the Poetry Method pinpointed that to obtain the best from the child the teacher should be:

- \* warm
- \* empathetic
- \* able to question
- \* have an understanding of the level at which the child can most easily learn
- \* be able to transcend the syllabus/method barriers that they have seen do not work for all children in the classroom
- \* has to have a rather high psychological maturity.

The student-teacher would correlate this with her tolerance for ambiguity, tentativeness and uncertainty in the child's attitude to reading.

### **Conclusion**

It would appear that reward, the healing relationship of the one-to-one

encounter and the attitude and personality of the remedial teacher are far more important to the remedial programme than the method used.

### **Summary**

In this chapter the question has been looked at of why this particular type of pupil is in need of extrinsic and intrinsic reward. There are many aspects of the Poetry Method that are rewarding, the most obvious one of which is reinforcement as given in varying ratios following the Behaviourist Model.

The one-to-one situation is discussed and how the enhanced self-concept and improved knowledge leads to transfer of learning. The importance of the characteristics and role of the remedial teacher herself is touched upon and the need for further study in this area stressed.

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CHAPTER 10

10        **METHODOLOGY**

In order to evaluate the effectiveness of the Poetry Method, four studies were conducted over the last few years as the method was developed and refined. In these studies the Poetry Method was used on *beginner remedial readers* - those children who have been at school for at least eighteen months and have not learnt any reading skills. These remedial pupils are differentiated from the *ordinary beginner readers* who are those children entering school in Grade i and who learnt to read with ease in the classroom.

10.1       **Study One**

This study utilized questionnaires (See Appendices X, XI and XII) to assess the subjective perceptions towards the Poetry Method of the parents of private remedial pupils, their children and of student teachers who have used the method. As well as an analysis of the questionnaire, this study also investigated the improvement of the children in reading skills (taken from pre- and post-test scores), spelling and visual-motor integration of those pupils who replied to the questionnaires, these were not only beginner pupils, but were those ranging in age from 6 years to 13,5 years on arrival.

In essence, the questionnaires were an attempt to find out whether the groups of parents, pupils and student teachers found the method from their subjective point of view to be:

1. A structure within which the parents could understand their roles as home-aid helpers.
2. A new means of teaching reading and spelling.
3. A means of motivating a new urge towards reading in remedial pupils, and a liking for poetry.
4. A total programme for the teacher from which they could add new ideas and applications of their own.

#### **10.1.1 Sample**

Replies to the Questionnaires came from:

30 Parents of private remedial children

30 Pupils

60 Student Teachers

##### **10.1.1.1 The parents**

These were middle class whites, most of whom had some form of tertiary education, and were householders in the northern suburbs of Johannesburg. Some of the children came from single-parent homes. In all cases it was the mother who completed the questionnaire.

##### **10.1.1.2 The remedial pupils**

**Age:** The children's ages were those of Grade 2 to Standard VI (Grade 9), ranging from 6 years to 13,5 years (i.e. this group consisted of any pupils taught, not only beginner readers).

**IQ:** All the children were presumed not to be intellectually impaired when starting lessons, since none came

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from the 'special' class of their school. Those whose IQs were known had varying discrepancies between their verbal and non-verbal IQ scores.

**Sex:** Although there are a few girls amongst the researcher's group, the majority of those tested were boys. This is a common finding of those working with remedial pupils.

**Economic Background:** All the children in the study were white English-speaking children from middle-class homes from the northern suburbs of Johannesburg.

**Previous Remedial Help:** As far as was known, none of the children in the study had received remedial help before embarking on the programme.

**Language Background:** English was the home language of all the group.

#### 10.1.1.3 The student teachers

The student teachers came from the researcher's three classes of 4th Year Junior Work students from the Cape Town Teacher's College of the years 1985, 1986 and 1987. The students take a course entitled "Remedial Dydaxology" designed to teach remedial methods which will enable them to help pupils in their future classes struggling with reading, and others who may not have had access to remedial help from a specialized remedial teacher. The aim of the course is to

train the students to recognize learning problems and to be able to channel the more serious ones to those specialists who can best help - occupational therapists, speech therapists, remedial teachers, etc. They are taught to help those children who may have a temporary learning difficulty, and to start training those waiting for specialist help.

The students involved in this study each tested, taught and retested her own pupil. The number of lessons range in number from 9 to 23 but since the time was not available for the students to teach more than five months of the college year, the average length was about 13 lessons. The statistics have taken cognisance of this fact (See Study 4, Table 6). The students were white English-speaking young girls between the ages of 19 and 26 years. Some came from an Afrikaans background, but all had at least their first three years at college as a background in teaching English children's rhymes and poetry, if these had not been part of their own childhood. Over their three years at college they are exposed to some months of practical teaching in classes ranging from Grade i to Std 1 (Grade 3).

### **10.1.2 Instruments**

A self-devised questionnaire was used, with three variants to suit parents, pupils and student teachers (Appendices X, XI & XII). These questionnaires were formulated around the following ideas:

#### **10.1.2.1 The parent questionnaires aimed to establish:**

- \* The involvement of the parent in the total Poetry Method (Qu. 1-5)

- \* The manner in which spelling was dealt with by the parent (Qu. 6-9)
- \* How *homework* affected the parent/child relationship, and how it was undertaken (Qu. 10-13)
- \* Whether the Poetry Method encouraged further and more motivated reading (Qu. 14 and 15)
- \* Whether the child still had a problem or had needed extra help over his school career, and whether the parent would buy the book version of the Poetry Method (Qu. 16-18)

**10.1.2.2 The pupil questionnaire aimed to establish:**

- \* Enjoyment of the lessons and of the use of poetry (Qu. 1-5)
- \* Whether spelling had become easier to the child (Qu. 6)
- \* Whether the child was motivated to read on his own (Qu. 7, 9 & 10)
- \* Whether the child would have liked his own copy of the Poetry Method book (Qu. 8)

**10.1.2.3 The student teacher questionnaire aimed to establish:**

- \* Whether the pre-programme teaching advice was sufficient (Qu. 1-4)
- \* An analysis of the usability and format of the programme (Qu. 5-21)
- \* Their opinions of the teaching of spelling using the Poetry Method (Qu. 22-27)
- \* Their opinions on the inclusion of homework (Qu. 28-33)
- \* The results the programme brought about, whether they would buy the book, and what the method lacked (Qu. 34-40)

### 10.1.3 Operationalization of the Study

#### 10.1.3.1 Questionnaires to parents and pupils

Questionnaires were sent to 320 parents of the approximately 600 pupils taught by the researcher in a one-to-one situation during the period 1974 to 1986.

The number sent out was so much less than the number of pupils taught because it was known that some families had emigrated, others had moved and in three families, ex-pupils had died. Since in many cases more than one sibling had been tested and taught from these missing families, this greatly reduced the response rate.

- \* Private teaching took place in the few limited after-school hours available, so no more than an average of 40 to 50 pupils were taught a year.
- \* 28, or 8,7% of the questionnaires sent out were returned 'address unknown' (since this count others continue to dribble in, more than a year after they were sent, also marked 'address unknown').

Of the 320 questionnaires sent to parents and pupils, a 50% return was hoped for. In actuality, the return was 10%, i.e. 33. Of these, three were incomplete, so 30 papers from both parents and from children were able to be analyzed. Replies came from children taught between the years 1974-1984. The statistical analysis of the pre-test and post-test scores was taken from the respondent pupils tested on the Neale Analysis of Reading, Schonell Standard Spelling and Beery Test of Visual-Motor Integration and the maximum/minimum was

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taken (see Table 4). The group is referred to as 05. Information looked for was:

- number of lessons given
- age of those children who replied, before and after lessons
- a comparison of results between those who were taught the method when it was first conceived and results recorded in the years 1974 to 1978; those who were taught it once the method had been established - 1978 to 1981; and those who were taught the method in its refined state and with the use of the book - 1982 to 1984.
- A breakdown of pre- and post-results showing the improvement changes\* in reading age, spelling age and change in visual-motor integration scores.

#### 10.1.3.2 Questionnaires to student teachers

79 questionnaires were sent out to student teachers as follows:

18 in 1985

27 in 1986

34 in 1987

A 75% return was hoped for from the past students of 1985 and 1986.

As it turned out, an 83% return was received. Of the 34 1987 pupils,

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\* All changes in ages are adjusted in the computer programme used (BMDP) for natural age improvement, since with the passing of time one would expect a change in reading age, e.g. a child of 7,0 years given lessons or not would by the exposure to education be expected to have an equivalent raise in reading/spelling score to that of time passed. Thus were his R.A. at chronological age 7,0 years also 7,0 years, then six months later it would be expected to be 7,6 years. If his R.A. at 7,0 years was 6,6 years, then six months later it would be expected to be R.A. 7,0 years, although he would by now be 7,6 years in chronological age. It was felt that unless this natural age change was built into the statistical design then results would look unnaturally enlarged.

four did not use the Poetry Method, so the total number of student questionnaires analyzed is 60.

The statistical aspect of Study One was a comparison of the pre-test and post-test results using related tests at a minimum level of  $p < 0,001$ .

#### 10.1.4 Hypothesis 1

That the pupils taught improved significantly from pre-test to post-test in reading, spelling and visual-motor integration.

*Null Form Hypothesis 1:* That there is no change in the post-test compared to pre-test scores of those pupils who replied to the questionnaire, taught the Poetry Method.

### 10.2 Study Two

This study was designed to compare the reading accuracy scores of beginner remedial pupils taught by the Poetry Method, to a group of beginner remedial pupils taught another method, and these results were compared to those of normal beginner readers, i.e. three groups in all were compared.

#### 10.2.1 Hypothesis 2

That pupils using the Poetry Method improved in reading accuracy scores as measured by the Neale Accuracy Reading Ability Test, significantly more than pupils using other methods.

*Null Form Hypothesis 2:* That there was no significant statistical

difference in improvement in reading scores between pupils who used the Poetry Method and those using other methods.

The minimum probability level used will be  $p < ,05$ .

The statistical test used will be a related t test.

**10.2.1.1 Sample (See Appendix, Groups 01, 02 & 03)**

**GROUP 1:** Pupils taught by the researcher after school on a one-to-one basis, all of whom were beginner readers with learning problems. This constituted the Experimental Group.

N = 90

**GROUP 2:** Remedial pupils taught on a one-to-one basis by a remedial teacher attached to a local Cape Education Department Clinic, who taught the boys of a local primary school during school hours. This constituted the First Control Group.

N = 90

**GROUP 3:** Beginner readers from the same primary school who were taken from their regular classes and tested for reading at the end of Grade i, Grade ii and Std 1. This constituted the Second Control group.

N = 90

**MATCHING OF SAMPLES:** The number of children were matched in the three groups as follows:

1. The mean ages of the three groups were equivalent for the chronological age used when pre-testing. It was 7 years 7 months.
2. *IQ*: All groups were of average or above IQ.
3. The *economic status and language background* of the children were similar in the three groups, i.e. white, middle-class, English.
4. *Reading background*: The subjects in all three groups were all non-readers before being taught by any reading method.

5. *Teaching period*:

Group 1 (experimental group): Remedial lessons (see Table 5) varied from 17 to 40 sessions of three-quarters of an hour each, ranging from six to ten months in time taken.

Group 2 (control): Remedial lessons of a half hour each were given twice a week for a school year, i.e. over 10 months, 80 half hour lessons, or 40 full hour lessons (equivalent to the length of the entire Poetry Method programme).

Group 3 (control) received the first three years of ordinary schooling. These boys were tested for reading at the end of Grade i, Grade ii and Std 1 (Grade 3). The Grade i score acts as their pre-test score, and either the Grade ii or the Std 1 score had been chosen as the post-test score according to the matching up to those in Grade ii and Std 1 in the experimental group.

#### 10.2.1.2 Instruments

One of the most difficult aspects of this whole Poetry Method study was to find another remedial teacher who had a large enough sample, using the same tests as the researcher, and to make sure her pupils were beginner readers. The one eventually found had used only part of the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability - the Accuracy Test (Neale, 1966). The other parts consist of tests for comprehension (used in Study 3 and 4) and reading rate. In the accuracy test, a raw score is taken of the child's reading of short, illustrated passages that give context clues to the meaning, and are graded in difficulty. These raw scores are translated by a table (Neale, 1966;38) into reading accuracy age scores. The test allows the tester to diagnose the child's mistakes in the visual and auditory parameters. Visual mistakes could be substitutions of different visually perceived letters, reversals, inversions, additions, omissions, etc. Auditory mistakes would include mispronunciations, substitutions of incorrect speech sounds, etc.

*Reliability* of this test was taken from correlations between the Form A and the Form B and between the Form A and form C - i.e. parallel forms of the test. The correlations for word accuracy between Forms A and B and Forms A and C were identical, being 0,98. Mean and spread scores for each age group were also taken as a means of reliability testing (Neale, 1966;13).

*Validity:* Factor-analyses were carried out on nine year olds and eleven year olds (N = 200) using tests of the time, e.g. the Holborn Reading Scale, Schonell English Usage and Vocabulary Test, Peel

English Test, etc. (Neale, 1966;15). Of interest to this study is that the validity coefficient taken on the 'pooling square method' for the nine year old groups was 0,95.

### 10.2.1.3 Operationalization of the study

The aspects to be compared in each of the three groups were the

Chronological Age on arrival	Pre-programme Neale accuracy and reading test score	and	Chronological Age when leaving	Post - pro - gramme Neale accuracy read- ing test score
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Duration of lessons are also noted (see Table 5, Study 2). The post-results were again adjusted for natural age improvement (see footnote, p. 209).

Group One: the experimental group were tested by the researcher to make up the 90 subjects in this study.

Group Two: the remedial control group were all tested by one remedial teacher before her teaching of them, and then retested by her (90 subjects).

Group Three: the normal control group were all tested by the same teacher before and after normal classroom reading learning. Again there are scores of 90 subjects.

## 10.3 Study Three

The third study investigated the affect the Poetry Method had on the reading and spelling scores of beginner readers who had taken the Poetry Method

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programme, as well as on visual-motor integration scores - an aspect of the child's learning problem that is not deliberately trained by the Poetry Method.

### 10.3.1 Hypotheses

#### 10.3.1.1 Hypothesis 3

That the Poetry Method significantly improves scores on reading, spelling and visual-motor integration tests above the normal expected natural age improvement.

*Null Form Hypothesis 3:* That there were no significant statistical differences in the improvement of reading, spelling and visual-motor integration scores on the Neale Analysis of reading, the Schonell Standard spelling test and the Beery test of visual-motor integration, between those subjects on the Poetry Method and the normal expected natural age improvement. A minimum probability level of  $p < 0,05$  will be adopted using a related t test.

#### 10.3.1.2 Hypothesis 4

That even though no specific perceptual training is included in the form of shape training or other perceptual training within the Poetry Method, the visual-motor integration scores of the pupils significantly improved as measured by the pre- and post-tests using the Beery Test of Visual Motor Integration.

*Null Form Hypothesis 4:* That there was no significant statistical difference in the post-test scores of the visual-motor integration on the Beery Test, as compared to the pre-test scores, after using the Poetry Method. Again the minimum statistical probability level used will be  $p < ,05$  in all hypotheses, using a related t test.

### 10.3.2 The Sample

This sample consisted of 100 beginner remedial pupils who attended private remedial lessons on a one-to-one basis over the years with the researcher. The pupils fit the same variables as those in Study One (10.1.1.2) except that the age range before lessons is 6 years to 9 years 6 months and the class range is from Grade i to Std 1 (Grade 3).

### 10.3.3 The Instruments

The tests used in this study were the complete Neale Analysis of Reading Ability, the Schonell Graded Spelling Test, and Beery Test of Visual-Motor Integration.

The first part or reading accuracy aspect of the *Neale Analysis of Reading Ability* has been described in 10.2.1.2. A second score from the Neale was used for this study, number three, that of Reading comprehension. After reading each graded passage, the (forewarned) pupils answer a set of questions. This produces a raw score which is translated in a reading comprehension age in years and months.

*The Schonell Graded Spelling Test* (Schonell, 1965): This test, standardized in Scotland (where one presumes a high level of spelling ability is expected from each child), gives a reliable spelling age. From the words written by the pupil - dictated to the child within a meaningful sentence, e.g. "Bell . . . Ring the bell please . . . Bell" - it can be seen what type of problem the child has. The types of spelling problems that commonly surface are:

Visual: reversals, incorrect sequencing, visual memory or word-shape difficulties, etc.

and/or

Auditory: discrimination between similar and different letters, etc.

and/or

Lack of knowledge of spelling rules and their applications.

*The Beery Test of Visual-Motor Integration:* This is a shape-copying test, and from it can be ascertained whether the child shows problems in figure-ground recognition, spatial orientation, visual discrimination, reversals, juncture, etc. The perceptually orientated theorists, e.g. Kephart, Getman and Frostig (see Chapter 4) believed that these problems should be eradicated by specific shape-training before attempting reading. No specific shape training is included in the Poetry Method, but attention is given to these visual problems within words, phrases and sentences.

#### 10.3.4 Operationalization of the Study

Test results exist for all the 100 beginner pupils, as it was the researcher's approach to test all remedial pupils on their arrival for remedial lessons - whether or not they had been referred by other teachers or a psychologist. The reading and spelling scores were used diagnostically, and were useful reaffirmations of advance when other indications were shown that it was time that the remedial lessons came to an end, i.e. when the child was performing better in class, or appeared far happier and motivated. Besides the tests used in this study, other tests, viz. the Daniel's and Diack Phonics Reading

Test - the Larsen Hammill Test of Written Spelling, and the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test were used for extra diagnostic indication.

#### **10.4 Study Four**

The last of the studies took three years to complete. It made use of the researcher's fourth year students, each of whom used the Poetry Method as a part of their teacher-training course and tested for pre- and post-test results. The aim of this study was to find out whether the method was simple, clear and succinct enough to teach to others - even unqualified, inexperienced teachers, and to see whether similar results as the researcher had obtained could be obtained by others.

##### **10.4.1 Hypothesis 5**

That the Poetry Method taught by unqualified, inexperienced teachers produces significantly different results to those of the researcher.

*Null Form Hypothesis 5:* That there is no significant difference between the reading and spelling and visual-motor integration test results of children taught by student teachers, and those taught by the researcher. A minimum probability level of  $p < 0,05$  was adopted.

##### **10.4.2 The Sample**

The sample for Study Four consisted of 50 children from schools in the city, chosen from a list of children with learning problems to be seen by the itinerant remedial teacher from one of the City Child Education Clinics.

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The children were chosen so that they were matched to those pupils of the researcher's in Study One (see 10.1.1.2) in terms of age, English language background, socio-economic status and beginning reading. The only difference is that these children were specifically chosen as *beginner remedial* pupils, i.e. those who may have been in school for a year or two and not learnt to read.

#### 10.4.3 Instruments

As in Study 1, the tests used in this study were the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability Accuracy and Comprehension, the Schonell Graded Spelling Test and the Beery Test of Visual-Motor Integration. The Daniel & Diacks Standard Reading Test - a phonics short sentence test - has been added here. It gives a reading age read from a raw score between 5,3 years and 9 years. It is a useful indicator of real reading ability, i.e. word analysis and synthesis and knowledge of phonic combinations.

#### 10.4.4 Operationalization of the Study

Each child was taught by a student teacher who had received six to eight hours training in the Poetry Method. The training had taken the form of lectures, watching the video of the researcher teaching the method, analyzing the material and method and in simulated teaching and testing contexts.

Although the Poetry Method is not yet in print, the "Weekly to Strength", a remedial programme in Poetry Book 1 (See Appendix 2), and most of Book 2 was available for students to use, as were numerous phonics books and a collection of at least another thousand

poems gathered by the researcher. They had the choice of a couple of hundred children's readers belonging to the College, to try out on their pupils.

### **Summary**

In this chapter the four studies undertaken using the Poetry Method were described. The first of these utilized questionnaires sent to parents of ex-pupils and their children with an analysis of the results of these children, and questionnaires sent to student teachers who had taught the Poetry Method. The second study compared three groups - a remedial experimental, a remedial control and a normal control group, all of whom were tested to see if there was a significant change in reading accuracy scores due to the Poetry Method. The third study investigated whether reading, spelling and visual-motor integration test results were speeded up by having followed the Poetry Method training programme. Finally, the last study was conducted to see if other teachers could use the method to the same effect as the researcher.

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CHAPTER 11

11 RESULTS

In this chapter the results of each study will be presented.

11.1 Study One (Refer Chapter 10, p. 203)

11.1.1 Analysis of Questionnaires

11.1.1.1 Analysis of parents' questionnaires

An analysis of questionnaires sent to the parents of remedial pupils (for questionnaire, see Appendix X): N = 30.

1. To the question of whether the instructions on the Poetry Method were clear to the parents -

63%	found them clear;
20%	found them quite clear;
3%	found them unclear;
14%	could not remember.

2. On the point of whether the parents were aware that each week a particular phonic sound was included in the poems, spelling and books -

73,5%	were aware;
10%	were unaware;
16,5%	could not remember.

- 
3. 63% read poems aloud at home;  
10% did not;  
14% could not remember.
4. 60% said that oral reading from poems in the Poetry  
Method showed more expression than when  
the child read from books;  
20% did not notice this happening;  
20% could not remember.
5. 66% preferred listening to their child reading poetry  
to them than hearing them read from a  
boring basal reader;  
14% did not;  
20% did not remember.

**SPELLING:**

6. 93,5% called out the spellings to their children to  
repeat back as homework;  
6,5% could not remember.
7. 63% of these parents made the child *write* out the  
words;  
14% just called the words out and the child replied  
*verbally*;  
20% used both the above methods;  
3% could not remember.



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11. The amount of time spent on the homework varied -

less than half an hour a week:	16,5%
more than half an hour a week:	43%
more than one hour a week:	30%
could not remember	6,5%

12. The homework was done -

in small chunks:	0%
during the week:	43,5%
all in one go:	56,5%
it wasn't done:	0%

13. Regarding the feelings towards homework -

90%	felt there was sufficient to keep in contact until the following lesson;
0%	said there was not enough;
10%	felt there should not have been any.

READING:

14.

80%	answered that their child was reading and choosing library books on his own now;
20%	were not.

15. In his reading he displayed more of the following -

more interest	56,5%
more expression	43,5%
better comprehension	56,5%
understanding of what he reads	53,5%

---

RESULTS:

16. The following problem areas remain to this day -

writing*	53%
spelling	60%
reading	16,5%
vocabulary	23%
comprehension	20%
perceptual work	10%

17. As to whether the child has needed further remedial help, the following was found -

56,5%	did need further help;
40%	received help privately (Note: all the replies came from the Transvaal, where school help is not readily available);
16,5%	received help at school;
43,5%	did not need further help.

18. 30% of the parents would buy the Poetry Method;  
6,5% to re-cap what was taught;  
23,5% to carry on to the next level;  
60% would not buy it (Note: the mean age of the children is now 16 years, i.e. long past any usefulness that Book 1 could offer).

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\* As to whether writing means personal writing or handwriting was not clear.

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The discussion of these results can be seen in Chapter 12.

**11.1.1.2 Results of children's questionnaire on the Poetry Method**

Analysis of the 30 replies to the pupil's questionnaire show the following:

1.           40%       liked the American phonic workbooks best when remembering their lessons;  
              26%       liked the poetry aspect best;  
              20,5%     preferred the books available;  
              10,5%     could not remember;  
              3%        liked the spelling.

2. What was least liked was -

the spelling:	50%
followed by the books:	10,5%
and the poetry:	10,5%
the phonics:	6,5%

and 26% did not dislike any part of the Poetry Method (the remainder did not answer).

3. Asked whether they liked poetry now -

75%	did;
26,5%	did not.

4. Only four poems were remembered by two out of all 30 pupils:

*Buckingham Palace* - A.A. Milne

*The Song the Train Sang* - Neil Adams ('s' blends)

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*The News Paper* - D. Emdon ('ew' sound, Book 2)

*King Kong* - D. Emdon ('ng' sounds, Book 1, Week 13).

- |     |         |   |
|-----|---------|---|
| 5.  | 70%     | have read poems for fun since completing the Poetry Method;         |
|     | 30%     | have not.   |
| 6.  | 86%     | have found spelling to be easier;                                   |
|     | 14%     | have not.   |
| 7.  | 80%     | chose books other than school set works to read just for fun;       |
|     | 20%     | don't read for fun.   |
| 8.  | 66 1/3% | would buy the book containing remedial poems and spelling;          |
|     | 33 1/3% | would not (Note: the respondents include those at university!).     |
| 9.  | 80%     | admitted to enjoying reading now;                                   |
|     | 20%     | did not enjoy reading now.  |
| 10. | 80%     | of the pupils who answered the questionnaire make use of libraries; |
|     | 20%     | do not.   |

A statistical analysis of these children who replied to the questionnaires revealed the following information (see Table 4):

11.1.1.3 An analysis of the questionnaire for teachers

PRE-USE:

1. To the question as to whether the student teacher felt adequately prepared to teach -

63% answered yes;

37% answered no.

2. Whether the programme was able to cover all the needs of their particular pupil -

60% answered yes;

40% answered no.

3. More information should have been included in the programme regarding -

handwriting: 17%

perceptual training: 30%

arithmetic: 30%

speed reading: 10%

other: 0%

4. The level of play/teaching was -

too easy: 3%

just right: 90%

too difficult: 7%

---

USABILITY:

5. Organization of lesson time was as follows -

5%	2 x half hours a week
67%	three-quarters of an hour a week
28%	one hour a week
0%	other.

6. As to whether readers and phonics workbooks were easily available for the use of the student teachers -

83% said yes;          7% said no.

7. The programme would be most useful in the following format:

A teacher's handbook plus workbook for pupil including poems and spelling - 68%.

A teacher's handbook and poems and spelling of the teacher's own choice - 25%.

Just the idea given, and free choice in method, layout and resources - 7%.

8. As to whether the instructions and format of the programme were clear -

85% said yes;          15% said no;

Remarks included such things as the structure was useful but there was little given variation.

9. The students would prefer -

the poems to be hand-printed -	82%
the poems to be typewritten -	18%

10. As to whether illustrations would have added to the interest -

80% said yes;      20% said no.

Pro-illustration remarks included mention that some colour was needed, pictures for spelling would help, and the fact that illustrations would aid comprehension and stimulate vocabulary and add interest. Children prefer pictures to words, so some students say.

Anti-illustration remarks: comments included the fact that illustrations would limit images formed by the poetry and it would be far more creative if children illustrated their poems themselves, or teacher and pupil could make their own as they go along.

11. As to whether the programme was repetitious -

82% said yes;      18% said no.

12. Whether they disliked the repetition -

35% said yes;      65% said no.

Remarks on the dislike of repetition included:

- the child was bored and brought his own ideas in.

Those who liked repetition said:

- they used the poem as a kick-off for other ideas
- the children enjoyed routine, it gave them security
- it didn't matter if you swapped order, as the structure remained
- never boring.

13. If the above was answered 'no', then the students explained why they preferred repetition, as follows:

The pupils found the basic structure and routine	
a form of security	45%
The student-teacher liked the reassurance of a basic	
structure	18%
From the basic structure one can more easily build	
ideas	43%

14. If the students disliked repetition, these were their ideas for innovations:

found own poems to use	28%
shared ideas with the pupils on personal	
experiences inspired by the poems	28%
changed the order of the programme	28%
spent less time on one section, and more on another	41%

15. Typical of the unforeseen problems that arose during the use of the programme were:

- shortage of time, pressure of covering content;
- one pupil had such a poor vocabulary he didn't understand the poems;
- repetition and drill was needed;
- some children left their files containing their homework at home;
- holidays caused too big a gap;
- some class teachers were disinterested;
- some poems were unsuitable;

- sometimes more teaching was required than stipulated.

16. The following students -

always read the poem first, before the child	5%
allowed the child to sight-read the poem	50%
read the poem together with the pupil on first reading	20%
varied their approach with every poem	88%

17. Regarding the acting of the poems -

student teachers acted out the poems	7%
only their pupils acted out	25%
or both acted them out together	58%

18. As to whether the pupils were tape-recorded while reading the poems -

82% said yes; 18% said no.

19. As to whether the pupils ever brought poems of their own -

7% said yes; 93% said no.

20. Amongst the student teacher's favourite poems were:

Superman (ā)  
Fred and Ted (ē)  
Ding-a-ling (i)  
Bugs (ū)  
Clickety Clack (ck)  
To Let (ck)  
Shelling Peas (sh)  
Sandwich (ch)  
Ning Nong Nang (ng)  
My Puppy (double consonant)  
Listen to the Band (ā)

Pat-a-Cake (ă)  
The Fisherman (ă)  
Helping Mother (i)  
Some do's and dont's (s blends)  
Looking Smart (s blends)  
Susie's Galoshes (sh)  
Chick Chick Chatterman (ch)  
Key of the Kingdom (ng)  
King Kong (ng)

21. Amongst the student teacher's least favourite poems were:

nonsense poems  
those with no rhyme  
Polly Put the Kettle On (double consonant)  
Jack and Jill (double consonant)  
Little Tommy Tucker (double consonant)  
Ritch Bitch (changed to Rich Witch) (ch)

**SPELLING:**

22. When first teaching the spelling, the following student teachers

made their pupils -

read the lists aloud	45%
write those words he knew	17%
both read the list and write those he knew	38%

23. For homework the student teachers gave the child -

the whole list as in the programme	40%
just the words he didn't know how to write	42%
the list from the programme and extra corrections	50%
nothing	13%

24. The spelling was corrected -

immediately by the teacher	28%
the child wrote the correct word above the	

- 
- |   |     |
|---|-----|
| mistake and entered it in his 'dictionary'      | 68% |
| the work was corrected at the end of the lesson | 4%  |
25. By Week 10 the student teacher could see -
- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| an obvious improvement in the spelling | 59% |
| no change                              | 25% |
| more and more mistakes cropping up     | 8%  |
26. After re-testing, the student teacher could see -
- |  |     |
|--|-----|
| a noticeable change in the spelling                | 60% |
| a change only seen on the standardized test result | 7%  |
| no change  | 33% |
27. The sort of remarks made on the spelling were:
- Negative:
- lists too long
  - after a few weeks should be re-testing test
  - should be handwritten not typed (Book 2 is typed)
  - spelling should include everyday vocabulary
  - alternative spelling tests needed
  - even though corrected, child still made mistakes the next week.
- Positive:
- spelling tricks are useful
  - children enjoyed system and enjoyed getting more and more correct

- getting the children to correct themselves immediately and write in their dictionaries really helped
- attitude to spelling improved
- the wide, varied lists enlarged pupils' vocabularies
- the method is thorough and methodical.

**HOMEWORK:**

28. As to whether homework was given as part of the programme -

95% said yes;            5% said no.

29. Did the child do the homework each week? -

77% said yes;            23% said no.

30. Were complaints made regarding homework? -

15% said yes;            85% said no.

31. These complaints were made by -

the pupil	10%
the parents	0%
the class teacher	5%
the school principal	7%

32. As to whether the homework speeded up the programme -

70% said yes;            30% said no.

33. Was there any benefit given by the homework? -

92% said yes;            8% said no.

Negative remarks:

- the homework was not backed up by the mother or teacher;
- the homework was sloppily done, broken books were returned every time;
- the file was not brought back, so it broke up the continuity for the week's programme.

Positive remarks:

- the work at home speeded up the programme;
- the child loved having his own file;
- homework included his mother into the programme so the child was interested in what he was doing;
- the child did as little as possible in the teaching situation so the homework filled in on what he missed.

RESULTS (of the Poetry Method):

34. Before re-testing, improvement was seen in the following areas -

oral reading	65%
vocabulary	25%
comprehension	33%
spelling	48%
nothing	7%

35. After re-testing, it was confirmed that the child had improved in -

oral reading	53%
vocabulary	25%
comprehension	40%
spelling	60%
nothing	0%

36. As to whether the reward system was a useful means of motivation -

96% said yes; 4% said no.

Negative remarks were:

- the child did not need reward, he enjoyed the programme anyway;
- the child did not need sweets.

Positive remarks were:

- the children loved the verbal reward and physical touching;
- the children loved the stickers, stars and star charts;
- because the Poetry Method was so motivating, it reached its goal;
- a very important part of the programme;
- the reward needed turned intrinsic and the child no longer needed material rewards.

37. Those who found it useful to have a grasp of the whole programme from the beginning -

82% said yes; 18% said no.

38. Of those who would buy the book *Weekly to Strength* if it were published, the one they would buy would be -

Book 1 (non-reader to literacy)	88%
Book 2 (R.A. 8½ to 10 years)	62%
Book 3 (R.A. 10 to 13 years)	20%

39. What the programme was lacking:

- a publisher;
- more phonic rules were needed for the teacher;
- more versatility and variation for special needs;
- more creative writing, games and written exercises;
- arithmetic programme needed;
- illustrations;
- perceptual training and handwriting;
- more time per session and a break every four weeks;
- less rigid layout;
- worksheets.

40. What the student teacher liked about the Poetry Method:

- provides a useful structure easily usable even by inexperienced teachers;
- it offers a wonderful alternative programme of reading and it is an interesting way of introducing phonics;
- a good clear layout and clear instructions;
- the pupils loved the poems;
- the poems were liked for their variety of short verses and rhythm;

- lots of freedom of choice;
- a very good means of teaching vocabulary and comprehension;
- a flexible programme as you can start where you like and can go at own pace;
- it followed the school phonics syllabus which was useful;
- useful for creative movement, mime and expressing motivating;
- the Poetry Method is also very good for class teacher;
- the child gained security and satisfaction through the programme.

As part of Study 1, the change from the pre-test score to the post-test score in reading accuracy, comprehension, spelling and visual-motor integration was investigated by means of a related t test at  $p < 0,001$ .

The following Table 4 of the results of Group 05 represents the scores of the 30 remedial pupils of all ages who replied to the questionnaire.

TABLE 4            STUDY 1            GROUP 05

THE RESULTS ON 30 REMEDIAL PUPILS OF ALL AGES WHO REPLIED TO THE QUESTIONNAIRE

	MAXIMUM	MINIMUM	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	RELATED t TEST df = 29
NUMBER OF LESSONS	55	16	33	10,52	
CHRONOLOGICAL AGE BEFORE LESSONS	13,5 years	6 years	9,9 years	1,92	
CHRONOLOGICAL AGE AFTER LESSONS	14,4 years	7 yrs 9 mths	10,6 years	1,86	
NEALE ACCURACY	2,2 years	- 2 mths	10 mths	,61	7,127 p < ,001
NEALE COMPREHENSION	3 yrs 9 mths	-0 yrs 6 mths	1 yr 2 mths	1,00	5,32 p < ,001
SCHONELL SPELLING	2,7 months	- 6 mths	1 year	,74	6,39 p < ,001
BEERY VISUAL-MOTOR INTEGRATION	4 yrs 2 mths	- 1 year	1 yr 2 mths	1,50	4,307 p < ,001

This table shows that for the test of Reading - Neale accuracy and comprehension, the Schonell spelling test and the Beery test of Visual-motor integration - the improvement on re-testing was highly significant over the original score.

This table shows that for the tests of reading - the Neale Accuracy and Comprehension, the Schonell Spelling Test and the Beery Visual-Motor Integration - the improvement on re-testing is highly significant over the original score.

11.2 Study 2

The following are the results of each group used in the comparison of reading scores on the Neale Accuracy Reading Test before and after being taught (see 10.2):

Group 1 (Experimental Group)

The group (n = 90) of beginner remedial pupils of the researcher, on whom the Poetry Method had been used.

Group 2 (Control)

A group of beginner remedial readers (n = 90) taught by another remedial teacher.

Group 3 (Control)

A group of normal beginner readers taught to read by several different methods.

Results as seen on Table 5 on the next page show that when Group 1 is compared to Group 2, the improvement of Group 1 on the Neale Accuracy Test of Reading is highly significant: ( $t = 9,23$ ) ( $p < 0,001$ ).

However, Group 1, the experimental group, is compared to Group 3 ( $t = 1,70$ ) which is not statistically significant.

TABLE 5 STUDY 2

COMPARISON BETWEEN EXPERIMENTAL GROUP 01 AND TWO CONTROL GROUPS 02 AND 03 ON NEALE ACCURACY IMPROVEMENT

	GROUP No.	MAXIMUM	MINIMUM	MEAN	STD. DEV.	RELATED t TESTS df 178
CHRONOLOGICAL AGE BEFORE LESSONS	01	9 yrs 6 mth	6 yrs 2 mth	8 yrs 0 mth	,71	
	02	9 yrs 0 mth	6 yrs 2 mth	7 yrs 6 mth	,69	
	03	8 yrs 4 mth	6 yrs 4 mth	7 yrs 2 mth	,42	
CHRONOLOGICAL AGE AFTER LESSONS	01	10 yrs 0 mth	7 yrs 0 mth	8 yrs 6 mth	,67	
	02	10 yrs 0 mth	7 yrs 3 mth	8 yrs 6 mth	,68	
	03	9 yrs 9 mth	7 yrs 3 mth	8 yrs 5 mth	,49	
THEREFORE ESTIMATED DURATION OF LESSONS	01	6 mth	10 mth	6 mth		
	02	1 yr 0 mth	1 yr 1 mth	1 yr 0 mth		
	03	1 yr 5 mth	11 mth	1 yr 2 mth		
NEALE ACCURACY OF READING AGE IMPROVEMENT	01	2 yrs 4 mth	6 mth	9 mth	,57	} t = 9,23 p < 0,0001 } } t = 1,70 not sig. }
	02	2 yrs 0 mth	-1 yr 0 mth	,02 mth	,54	
	03	3 yrs 4 mth	1 yr 0 mth	,7 mth	,80	

11.3 Study 3

The following are the results of 100 children tested and taught by the researcher and re-tested to see the results of the Poetry Method.

TABLE 6      STUDY 3      GROUP 04  
PUPILS TAUGHT BY THE RESEARCHER, RESULTS OF IMPROVEMENT

	MAXIMUM	MINIMUM	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	RELATED t TEST df = 99
NUMBER OF LESSONS	68	8	29	11,2	
CHRONOLOGICAL AGE BEFORE LESSONS	9 yrs 6 mths	6 yrs 0 mths	7 yrs 9 mths	,76	
CHRONOLOGICAL AGE AFTER LESSONS	10 yrs 0 mths	6 yrs 9 mths	8 yrs 6 mths	,71	
NEALE ACCURACY	2 yrs 4 mths	- 8 mths	9 mths	,54	14,24 p < ,001
NEALE COMPREHENSION	3 yrs 2 mths	- 5 mths	1 yr 5 mths	,76	12,32 p < ,001
SCHONELL SPELLING	2 yrs 5 mths	- 8 mths	9 mths	,55	13,69 p < ,001
BEERY TEST OF VISUAL-MOTOR INTEGRATION	4 yrs 2 mths	- 1 yr 0 mths	1 yr 1 mth	1,22	9,06 p < ,001

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**11.3.1 Results**

From t values on Table 6, Study 3, it can be seen that the results of the 100 children on the Neale Reading Accuracy ( $t = 14,25$ ), Neale Reading Comprehension ( $t = 12,32$ ), Schonell Spelling ( $t = 13,69$ ), and Beery Test of Visual-motor Integration ( $t = 9,06$ ) is highly significant.

**11.4 Study 4**

Study 4 includes results on the teaching of the Poetry Method by student teachers.

Group 06 - 1985	(n = 12)	
Group 07 - 1986	(n = 22)	
Group 08 - 1987	(n = 26)	Total n = 60.

On the comparison of Group 06 to 07, 06 to 08, and 08 to 07 on all the tests, i.e. Neale Accuracy and Neale Comprehension of Reading Ability, Schonell Spelling and Beery Visual-motor Integration, as well as the added Daniels and Diack Phonic Reading Test, not one of the t tests showed significance. Therefore one can accept that the three year groups performed similarly, and combining them into one group for comparison with the researcher's results is justified.

TABLE 7 : STUDY 4

COMPARISON OF RESULTS BETWEEN 3 STUDENT TEACHER GROUPS : 06 - 1985 (N = 12), 07 - 1986 (N = 22), 08 - 1987 (N = 26)

	GROUP No.	MAXIMUM	MINIMUM	MEAN	INDEPENDENT t TEST
NUMBER OF LESSONS	06 07 08	16 23 30	5 9 14	9 13 16	
CHRONOLOGICAL AGES BEFORE LESSONS	06 07 08	8 yrs 6 m 9 yrs 7 m 10 yrs 1 m	6 yrs 3 m 6 yrs 9 m 7 yrs 4 m	7 yrs 7 m 8 yrs 4 m 9 yrs 0 m	
CHRONOLOGICAL AGES AFTER LESSONS	06 07 08	8 yrs 9 m 10 yrs 0 m 10 yrs 8 m	6 yrs 6 m 7 yrs 2 m 7 yrs 9 m	8 yrs 0 m 8 yrs 9 m 9 yrs 2 m	
IMPROVEMENT ON NEALE ACCURACY	06 07 08	1 yr 7 m 1 yr 9 m 2 yrs 6 m	-6 mth -4 mth -7 mth	3 mth 6 mth 4 mth	$t = -.95$ $df = 32$ not sig. $t = .87$ $df = 46$ not sig. $t = -.27$ $df = 36$ not sig.
IMPROVEMENT ON NEALE COMPREHENSION	06 07 08	2 yrs 6 m 2 yrs 9 m 2 yrs 3 m	-1 yr 0 m -1 yr 0 m -10 mth	4 mth 1 yr 0 mth 7 mth	$t = -2.25$ $df = 32$ not sig. $t = 1.33$ $df = 46$ not sig. $t = -1.29$ $df = 36$ not sig.
IMPROVEMENT ON SCHONELL GRADED SPELLING TEST	06 07 08	1 yr 1 yr 6 m 2 yrs 5 m	-6 mth -5 mth -6 mth	5 mth 4 mth 2 mth	$t = -1.73$ $df = 32$ not sig. $t = .80$ $df = 46$ not sig. $t = -.75$ $df = 36$ not sig.
IMPROVEMENT ON BEERY VISUAL-MOTOR INTEGRATION TEST	06 07 08	3 yrs 0 m 3 yrs 0 m 6 yrs 7 m	-6 mth -5 mth -1 yr 3 mth	7 mth 9 mth 1 yr 4 mth	$t = -.51$ $df = 32$ not sig. $t = -1.70$ $df = 46$ not sig. $t = -1.51$ $df = 36$ not sig.
IMPROVEMENT DANIELS & DIACK READING	06 07 08			7 mth 6 mth 4 mth	$t = -.51$ $df = 32$ not sig. $t = .74$ $df = 46$ not sig. $t = 1.10$ $df = 36$ not sig.

In this final analysis, the combined students' results were compared to the researcher's and found to be significant on all tests except the Beery.

TABLE (8) STUDY 4

COMPARISON BETWEEN COMBINED STUDENT-TEACHER GROUP RESULTS (GROUPS 06, 07, 08) AND THE RESEARCHER'S RESULTS

IMPROVEMENT ON FOLLOWING TESTS	GROUP	MEAN	STANDARD DEVIATION	INDEPENDENT t TEST
NEALE ACCURACY	STUDENTS	0,4 mths	0,56	t = 4,59 p < 0,001
	RESEARCHER	0,9 mths	0,54	
NEALE COMPREHENSION	STUDENTS	1 yr 1 mth	0,83	t = 6,00 p < 0,001
	RESEARCHER	1 yr 5 mths	0,76	
SCHONELL GRADED SPELLING	STUDENTS	2 mths	0,51	t = 6,37 p < 0,001
	RESEARCHER	0,9 mths	0,55	
BEERY VISUAL-MOTOR INTEGRATION	STUDENTS	1 yr 0 mths	1,24	t = ,83 not significant
	RESEARCHER	1 yr 1 mth	1,22	

## Summary

In this chapter, results on the questionnaires sent out to the parents, pupils and student teachers were presented.

### Study 1

An analysis of the results of those pupils, parents and students who replied to the questionnaire showed that:

- \* *Parents* were aware of a specific and new method being tried out on their children. They enjoyed hearing the reading of poems, took an active interest in their homework spelling, and although just over half the sample pursued further remedial education, more than half the parents said that the children showed ore interest, better comprehension and understanding of what they were reading after using the Poetry Method.
- \* *Pupils* chose the phonic workbooks as their favourite part of the lesson, but overwhelmingly (three-quarters of the sample) admitted to liking poetry now, have read poems for fun and enjoy reading and make use of libraries; they have even found spelling to be easier. Statistical analysis of the results of the sample of children who replied to the questionnaire (N = 30) showed the improvement on reading spelling and visual-motor integration tests to be highly significant.
- \* *Students* felt they had been well trained in the use of the programme before they went out and taught it, and strongly recommended (93%) that a teacher's handbook be printed with a separate workbook for children. Although the programme was found to be repetitious, the students found both they and their pupils appreciated this and found

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the structure reassuring and a useful base from which to spread out and try innovative methods of teaching the poems such as tape-recording them, or acting them out. Following the methods suggested in the handbook, the students found the teaching of spelling rewarding and successful. 92% out of the 95% found the use of homework useful towards speeding up the programme, encouraging parental participation and keeping contact with the pupil. 88% of the students stated they would buy a "Weekly to Strength" Book 1, and 62% Book 2, 20% Book 3 if it were published but also as a class programme for phonics, spelling and reading.

### Study 2

A comparison of the improvement of the researcher's experimental group of beginner remedial readers compared to a control group of beginner remedial readers taught by another remedial teacher, and a control group of normal beginner readers taken from a local preparatory school, revealed that:

- \* When Group 01 (the experimental group), was compared to the Remedial Control Group 02, the improvement of Group 01 was far better, and the t test showed a result of 9,23 at  $p < 0,001$  which is highly significant.
- \* The comparison of the researcher's group to that of the normal reading group was shown to be not statistically significant ( $t = 1,70$ ).

### Study 3

An analysis of the results of the researcher's teaching the Poetry Method to beginner readers showed that there was a remarkable improvement between the pre- and post-test scores in reading accuracy, comprehension,

spelling and visual-motor integration. This was shown by related t tests to be statistically significant at  $p < 0,001$ .

#### Study 4

An analysis of the results of student teachers using the Poetry Method and a comparison of these to those results of the researcher, supported the view that students with minimal experience can operate this method successfully. Statistics showed that when results of one group were compared to each of the others, the improvement measured was not statistically significant, showing that they did all teach more or less similarly. This justified a comparison of the three student teacher groups to the improvement results of the researcher, and in this study the comparison on an independent t test showed significant improvement in comparison of improvement results on all tests but the Beery Visual-motor Integration Test. The latter may have been due to the students' range of results, showing the results as their minimum was -1,5 years and maximum 6,3 years.

From the results gained in the above studies, it is easily observable that the Poetry Method has been successful in bringing about improvement in reading, spelling and visual-motor integration. In the next and final chapter these results will be discussed and conclusions drawn.

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CHAPTER 12

12 DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

12.1 Discussion of Results of Study One - the Responses to the Questionnaires

12.1.1 Discussion of Results of Questionnaires sent to Parents

What can be seen from the parents' responses on a positive level is that the information supplied to parents at the start of the programme was clear enough for them to be generally fully aware of the workings of the Poetry Method. Most of the parents were pro-poetry. There was a perceived improvement in expressive oral reading of their child due to the poetry, and the parents enjoyed listening to poetry being read to them in place of the boring school readers. They found the poetry element of the programme to be novel and fun-laden.

Most parents actively involved themselves in the spelling homework more than twice a week, made the children write out the words, and then saw an improvement in school spelling and written language. This supports the view that parents can be very useful as tutor aids, and should be encouraged to participate in home programmes with their children far more than is commonly the practice.

Homework is a contentious area between parent and child. Perhaps the pre-programme counselling allowed for more positive results than negative - what was noticeable was that the children preferred Poetry Method homework to ordinary class homework -

possibly because all Poetry Method homework was materially rewarded by the remedial teacher at the next lesson. As was expected, more than half an hour and less than one hour was spent on the homework a week, and this proved to be sufficient to keep in contact until the following week. It also prevented the expense of a second lesson a week, which has proved when re-testing *does not* speed up the results at all. All areas of reading, i.e. vocabulary, comprehension, etc., were seen to have improved by the parents, but nearly all complained that spelling problems remained. The older the child, the harder it is to remediate spelling, because of the continual consolidation of new rules and spread of vocabulary. This group's spelling improvement was found to be statistically significant, ( $t = 6,39$   $p < ,001$ ), so age and vocabulary requirements would have to explain the need for further spelling help.

Further remedial help was needed by more than 50% of the children. This was unexpected and may be indicative of the ambitiousness of the type of parent who is prepared to pay and take her child to extra lessons to accelerate his progress. It may also have been due to the fact that the child left off remediation too soon. The minimum number of lessons was only 16 for Group 05 - the pupils of Study One - and the maximum number was 55, which is longer than one year and most unusual for the researcher. The mean number of 33 seems to be a reasonable number in which to show sufficient improvement until the natural recurrence of the reading problem, which happens with learning disability type children. About every two years the need for further reading help may reappear. Std II (Grade 4) reading requires far more silent reading than oral reading; in Std IV (Grade 6), certain requirements are made in more

complicated comprehension, and by Std VI (Grade 8), the child should be skimming and scanning as part of his reading skills. Children with learning problems do not make these changes with ease, and may need periodic help.

#### **12.1.2 Discussion of Results of Questionnaires sent to Pupils**

It was interesting that the aspect of remedial lessons most pupils remembered was the phonic workbooks which presented phonics and grammar in a simple game form and required little application for quick reward. Although spelling was liked least, a high percentage stated that they found their spelling easier - thus disagreeing with their parents' impressions that they did not. A high percentage (73,5%) not only admitted to liking poetry now, but 70% have actually read poetry for fun since completing the Poetry Method. 80% of the children chose books other than set works to read, and they do enjoy reading now. But again, as in the parent questionnaire, 20% of the children do not enjoy reading and do not use a library. It would be interesting to take this lack of interest further and to see whether their parents are readers or use the libraries.

#### **12.1.2 A discussion of the statistical analysis of the results of pupils who replied to the questionnaire and who had been taught by the Poetry Method (See Table 4, Group 05)**

The interesting points of note in this study are that the maximum number of lessons (55) was very high, as was the mean number (33). It may have been because of the longer stretch of the lessons given that prompted the pupils to reply to the questionnaire. They may

have built up a deeper relationship with the researcher, or the lessons may have had more meaning to them.

The range of ages on arrival, 6 years to 13,5 years, was interesting as these children span the ages expected of primary school children from Grade 1 to Std V (Grade 7), and the mean age, 9,9 years, represents a Std II level of reading ability.

A breakdown of the *improvement* shown by this random sample of primary school children shows that given an average of 33 lessons, i.e. less than the total programme of 40 lessons, children will, on average, improve 10 months in reading accuracy, 1 year in spelling age and 1 year 2 months in visual-motor integration score, *on top of* expected natural improvement.

The range seen in the results between minimum improvement (-1 year) and maximum improvement (4 years and 2 months) is so large on the Beery Test because it indicates that once one remediates a perceptual problem by whatever method, it no longer manifests itself in *shape-copying*. It may continue to be seen in reading and spelling mistakes, such as in reversals, inversions, visual sequencing and discrimination, etc. The minimum improvement is so low, -1 year, because in this group there may have been one or two children with severe perceptual problems impacted possibly with gross motor or neurological overtones, which suggest different specialized remediation by occupational therapists or optometrists.

The fact that four children out of the thirty had regressed in spelling score - as seen by a minimum improvement of -6 months in spelling - shows that this particular spelling method was either too fast or not functionally specific enough for those particular children. Three children showed a below 0 improvement in reading - the

minimum being -2 months. It is possible that these children had a developmental lag and would have caught on to reading later in their lives.

The maximum improvement in reading accuracy (2,2 years), reading comprehension (3,9 years), spelling (2,7 years) and visual-motor integration (4,2 years) shows that certain bright, highly motivated children can be greatly helped by remediation, proving that we should persist in giving those struggling this extra help, as some just need it as a boost to set them on their way.

Statistical tests of each of the scores of Neale Accuracy, Neale comprehension, Schonell spelling and the Beery Test of Visual-motor Integration show high significance over the original scores. This confirms that remediation helped those pupils who replied to the questionnaires.

### **12.1.3 Discussion of the Results of Questionnaires sent to Student Teachers**

#### **12.1.3.1 Pre-use**

It appears that the students felt they were adequately prepared, that the programme covered all their needs and was geared to the correct level of the child's ability. Certain student teachers felt the need for inclusion into the programme of perceptual training and arithmetic. This shows that with only a certain number of preparatory lectures, viewing the lecturer using the method on a video film and in actual teaching, the students felt ready and able to teach remedially on a one-to-one basis. Their needs also point out the needs of supplementary programmes to the Poetry Method - one on perceptual training ("Shape-Up"), one on handwriting ("Write-Way Up") and one

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on arithmetic ("Know Your Numbers"), all of which are in the process of being written by the researcher.

#### 12.1.3.2 Useability

The students mainly taught the three-quarters of an hour, once a week session suggested. Most children can concentrate for this length of time and it allows for revision of homework, testing and presentation of new work. Most students liked the present format of the programme, i.e. teacher's handbook and workbook for children, and they found the instructions to be clear and other material suggested to be easily obtainable.

The students were amenable towards the repetition of the programme and they found the structure reassuring and useful as a base from which to extend further. They suggested, however, that they preferred poems to be hand-printed in large letters, and most would have liked illustrations to aid comprehension and stimulate vocabulary. Some changed the order of the programme according to the needs of the pupil, and this seems to be the main use of a week-to-week repetitive structure - one can start at any point, and even go back and repeat certain sections if the child shows difficulty in any area.

From the replies to questions regarding the poetry itself, most of the student teachers gained a good deal of fun from tape-recording, acting out and reading the poems with the children. There were certain favourite poems that the children liked to repeat often and even learn off by heart, and there is no doubt that both the students and their pupils learnt a new respect for poetry.

#### 12.1.3.3 Spelling

The most popular method of presenting spelling for learning was for the student to give the child just the words he didn't know (after a pre-test) to learn at home. After giving dictation during the following week's lesson, most made the child correct the wrongly spelt words above the mistakes and enter them into his 'dictionary'. By ten weeks the change seen in the pupil's spelling was obvious, and by the time the final re-testing arrived, a noticeable change for the better was seen in the spelling of their pupils. This emphasizes the fact that spelling can be remediated, albeit slowly (with beginner readers spelling change is more obvious than with older children).

#### 12.1.3.4 Homework

Most students gave homework, and they felt this speeded up the programme. Although some children complained about it, rewards were given for all work done at home. The homework is a very important part of the programme, and the ease with which parents, pupils and student teachers took to it points to the possibility of reconsideration of the ban on all homework in South African schools until Std II (Grade 4).

#### 12.1.3.5 Results after using the Poetry Method

The most obvious results were seen in oral reading and spelling, and the reward system was felt by all to have had a good deal to do with the motivation of the pupils, and it was useful to them to know the total layout of the programme from commencement to 40 weeks later. Those students who would buy the *Weekly to Strength* book would

prefer to buy Book One, but many (62%) showed an interest in purchasing the next book, Book Two.

## **12.1.2 Conclusions of the Responses to Questionnaires**

### **12.1.2.1 Parents**

The parents who replied were obviously affected by the novelty and fun offered by using poetry for remedial reading. These same parents were the sort who took an interested, active role in helping their children with homework, and the fact that they bothered to answer the questionnaire even after some years of contact with the researcher shows a continuing interest in their child's education and the methods used to teach him. Reading was felt to be the biggest gain, and further remedial help was probably searched for, since the parents were the sort who were highly ambitious for their children and were prepared to spend anything on help for them (this was borne out by glowing accompanying letters of enthusiasm regarding their sons from those of five mothers whose boys were now studying B. Comm. at various universities). The Hawthorne effect on those involved, motivated parents probably contributed in no small way to the positive performance of their children.

### **12.1.2.2 Pupils - Conclusions of responses to questionnaires**

Poetry came second in likability to the American phonics workbooks that had been used, which shows that these consolidatory work pages are an integral part of the Poetry Method. When it is published in book form, complementary workbooks of that particular publisher can accompany the book, or could be produced to accompany the book. Although many pupils found spelling easier, it was not liked, indi-

cating that far more motivation should be built into the programme, explaining why spelling correctly is important and useful. The high percentage (70%) of children who have read poetry for fun since completing the programme indicate that poetry is not the onerous, avoided subject that some regard it. (One ex-pupil, now 19 years old, has sent an anthology of poems to the researcher that he has placed with a publisher). A response of 80% re-motivated readers is a satisfactory indication that remediation set these children back on the road to reading.

#### **12.1.2.3 Pupils - Conclusions on the statistical study**

The mean number of lessons (33) was close to the total expected number offered in the Poetry Method (40). This indicates that the Poetry Method is of adequate length. The mean improvement on the various tests (reading accuracy - 10 months; comprehension - 1 year 2 months; spelling - 1 year; Beery Visual-Motor Integration Test - 1 year 2 months) all indicate that within less than ten months of remedial lessons given once a week and using the Poetry Method, one can accelerate those aspects of learning that are most important in school work.

#### **12.1.2.4 Student teachers**

The students felt adequately informed regarding pre-use or training for the programme. They found the programme most usable and liked the format and presentation of the Poetry Method. They did suggest illustrations, but on the whole liked the repetitive structure of the weekly lessons. In the main, the poems were taught as suggested; innovations included more suitable poems, repetition and drill, more

teaching ideas on top of those given, liaison with class teacher, and more time to present each week's part of the entire programme.

They felt that the instructions for the teaching of spelling were clear, and that results were seen rapidly in the change in pupils' spelling. All felt that the giving of homework speeded up the programme and was generally felt to be most useful, besides involving the parents as teacher-aides. The reward system of stressing the positive and correct responses and the giving of stars and small prizes definitely motivated the children to perform better.

### 12.1.3 Summary of Conclusions of Study One

The questionnaires sent out came back with many positive feelings from parents, pupils and student teachers regarding the Poetry Method. An analysis of the results of those pupils who replied showed at least a year's advance above expected improvement in reading, spelling and visual-motor integration. Related tests found significant results in the improvement of the pupils on the Neale Accuracy and Comprehension Tests of Reading, the Schonell Spelling Test and the Beery Test of Visual-Motor Integration (significant above  $p < ,001$ ).

Therefore, Hypothesis One - that the pupils taught improved significantly from pre- to post-test in reading, spelling and visual-motor integration - has to be accepted. The Null Hypothesis One - that there is statistically no change in the post-test scores compared to pre-test scores of those pupils who replied to the questionnaire - has to be rejected. This confirms that the Poetry Method brings about positive results in children of various ages with differing problems and receiving varying amounts of remediation.

## **12.2 The Remedial Pupils of the Researcher**

### **12.2.1 Results of Study 2**

The remedial pupils of the researcher examined, 01, compared to those of the two control groups 02 and 03 - see Table 5, p. 243.

#### **12.2.1.1 Age before lessons**

The minimum age and maximum age is similar for both the remedial groups 01 and 02:

6 years 2 months                      to                      9 years and 6 months, and

6 years 2 months                      to                      9 years, respectively.

This is probably because beginner remedial reading problems are found in a large range of ages between Grade i and Std II (Grade 4). The maximum age of 8 years 4 months of normal beginner readers is lower than that of the remedial pupils because most normal children have at least begun to read by 8 years 4 months.

#### **12.2.1.2 Age after lessons**

The mean ages after lessons - 8,6 years; 8,6 years and 8,5 years respectively, shows what the researcher suspected by making her Book One range from beginner reading to literacy, i.e. most children will need no further remedial help once they are literate, literacy being conventionally accepted as 8,6 years.

**12.2.1.3 Estimated length of remediation**

From the estimated length of lessons given, it can be seen that the researcher, a private teacher paid by parents, had a shorter period of lessons (mean: 6 months) than the other department remedial teacher's pupils (mean: 1 year). The departmental teacher taught in a school where no fees were paid for remedial lessons, so a longer period could economically be spent with the child, with less achievement pressures from the parents. Normal children had just over one year of ordinary school before re-testing.

**12.2.1.4 Results on the Neale Accuracy Test as regards improvement above natural expected improvement**

The results show that those remedial pupils in the experimental group did very much better than the remedial pupils in the control group, although not as well as the normal children. The mean improvement for the experimental group was 9 months, whereas the control group showed that the average children of this group did not benefit from remedial lessons, in spite of having more lessons than the experimental group - six months more, or double as many.

**12.2.1.5 Results of the comparison of Group 01 to 02**

$t = 9,23$   $p < 0,001$  are highly significant. This demonstrates that the Poetry Method is more effective than the eclectic methods used by the particular remedial teacher who taught the control group. These results emphasize the findings of Holland (1960) and Myklebust and Johnson (1967) (see Chapter 3) that it is more constructive to follow a specific structure when remediating than to remediate randomly or functionally.

However, when the experimental group 01 is compared to the normal beginner reading group 03, the  $t = 1,70$  and shows that these improvements are not significant over the original scores. So the Poetry Method did not in this study bring the scores of remedial children up to those of normal beginner readers. As can be seen from the minimum improvement of normal children, which is 1 year as compared to 6 months of the researcher's pupils and -1 year on Group 02, the maximum improvement of the normal children showed as much as 3 years 4 months above the expected natural improvement, whereas the maximum improvement for Group 01 was 2 years 4 months and group 02 was 2 years. So it can be seen that normal readers take huge strides forward from non-reading within a year or two of starting school.

Results were statistically so significant that Hypothesis 2, which reads that pupils using the Poetry Method improved in reading accuracy scores as measured by the Neale Accuracy Reading Ability Test significantly more than pupils using other methods, can be accepted if one adds the word 'remedial' pupils - since the hypothesis is not accepted for 'normal' readers (see 10.2.1). The null form of the hypothesis would be rejected if one added the word 'remedial'. It would read as follows: 'that there was no significant statistical difference in improvement in reading scores between 'remedial' pupils who used the Poetry Method and those using other methods.'

### 12.2.2 Conclusions

It appears to be quicker to bring about a change in reading score in beginner remedial pupils to use a structured, well-planned method rather than teaching functionally or using random methods.

maturity and development sail ahead with remedial help. The mean results show that with the Poetry Method reading comprehension (1 year 5 months) surpasses accuracy (0 years 9 months), that spelling improves even though at this level of the school spelling is not a feature in the syllabus - other than learning the phonic combinations, and 1 year 1 months is a good mean improvement for visual-motor integration, considering no special shape training was given.

The results of tests to show improvement over original scores were highly significant on the Neale Accuracy and Comprehension Tests, Schonell Spelling Test, and Beery Visual-Motor Integration Test - see Table 6, p. 243. This confirms that the Poetry Method will bring about new attitudes and motivation towards reading, spelling and shape-copying.

The Null Hypothesis 3 is unsupported, and therefore must be rejected. It reads: "that there was no significant statistical difference in the improvement of reading, spelling and visual-motor integration scores on the Neale Analysis of Reading, the Neale Comprehension Test, the Schonell Standard Spelling Test and the Beery Test of Visual-Motor Integration for those subjects on the Poetry Method and the normal expected age improvement".

Hence it can be accepted, as stated in Hypothesis 3, that the Poetry Method significantly improves scores on reading, spelling and visual-motor integration tests above the normal expected natural age improvement.

The null form of Hypothesis 4, "that there was no significant difference in the post-test scores of the visual-motor integration on the Beery Test as compared

to the pre-test scores after using the Poetry Method must be rejected as it was not supported statistically.

Therefore Hypothesis 4 can be accepted. It reads: "That even though no specific perceptual training is included in the form of 'shape' training or other perceptual training with the Poetry Method, the visual-motor integration scores of the pupils significantly improved as measured by the pre- and post-tests using the Beery Test of Visual-Motor Integration.

### **12.3.1 Summary of Conclusions - Study 3**

From this study one may deduce that the Poetry Method brings about a change far above the expected improvement in a beginner remedial reader. One may also deduce that time spent on shape training and shape copying is time wasted. Remediating a perceptual problem that affects reading should be done through the eye movements, visual discrimination, spatial orientation, figure-ground training and visual sequencing of words used in printed meaningful reading and spelling.

### **12.4 Study Four**

Comparison between the student teacher groups showed that no significance at all between the improvement scores of the groups was seen on tests done on the Neale Comprehension Test, the Schonell Standard Spelling Test, the Beery Test of Visual-Motor Integration and the Daniels and Diack Phonic Reading Test.

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There are far too many variables that interfere in a comparison such as that taken. Some of these are:

- \* Number of teachers in each group ranged from 12 to 21
- \* Number of lessons ranged between a minimum of 5 to a maximum of 23
- \* The range of the children's ages before lessons was 6,3 years to 10 years and 2 months.

The comparison between the student teacher groups 06, 07 and 08 and the results of the researcher show significant improvement over original scores on the Neale Accuracy Test, the Neale Comprehension Test, the Schonell Graded Spelling Test and the Beery Test of Visual-Motor Integration. The Beery Test did not show this significance (see Table 8, p. 246). The explanation of the lack of significance between the researcher's scores and those of the student groups can be seen in the minimum and maximum score of the Group 8 Beery Test (Table 7, p. 245). The minimum is -1 year 3 months, and the maximum is 6 years 7 months, which is way above the other groups and the researcher's results. On this shape copying test, huge jumps can take place in post-test scores if the child suddenly grasps perception of shapes, but if the child has gross neurological problems he will not advance at all.

Therefore the null form of Hypothesis 4 can be retained in that there is no significant difference between the reading and spelling and visual-motor integration test results of children taught by student teachers and those taught by the researcher.

The reason for trying out this structured step-by-step programme on unqualified teachers was to see whether the programme could be used by third world

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teachers, teachers in country towns who are out of contact with remedial clinics, and parents of children with learning problems who are unable to obtain remedial help because of distance or lack of economic means. The fact that results were statistically significant and that the results of the researcher were not dissimilar from those of the student groups means that students are able to use the technique as effectively after a short period of training as the experienced remedial teacher.

### 12.5 Summary of Conclusions on Research Study

The efficacy of remediation (Chapter 2) has been shown by the results which demonstrate that certain children can take enormous leaps ahead with extra help. For example, in Table 6, p. 243, Study 3, the researcher's 100 beginner remedial students:

maximum improvement on Neale Accuracy of Reading Test:	2 years 4 months
maximum improvement on Neale Comprehension of Reading Test:	3 years 2 months
maximum improvement on Schonell Standard Spelling Test:	2 years 5 months
maximum improvement on Beery Visual-Motor Integration Test:	4 years 2 months

From the means, which show statistically significant results, it can be seen also that the average remedial pupil on all the above studies is shown to benefit by remediation too.

By comparing the Poetry Method to those structural standards laid down by method theorists (Chapter 3), it can be seen that the Poetry Method includes the essential theoretical ingredients required by a remedial method.

When comparing the Poetry Method to other remedial methods used (Chapter 4), it can be seen that the Poetry Method stands up well as an eclectic method, making full use of the visual, auditory, kinaesthetic and tactile senses. The Poetry Method draws from synthetic and analytic processes of teaching reading (Chapter 5), and the best aspect of poetry is the meaning gained from its content (Chapter 6), making the reading of poetry a painless and fun-filled process. Poetry's special features are that speech training, oral reading and auditory training can be built into a programme using it (Chapter 7).

Spelling is introduced gradually and systematically to great advantage in the Poetry Method (Chapter 8) and studies 1, 3 and 4 show results to support the view that spelling can improve with remediation.

The questionnaires, studies and statistical analyses of results show that the Poetry Method is easily understood by parents, teachers and pupils and that it is a workable programme that compares favourably to other methods.

Improvement in scores of reading, spelling and visual-motor integration demonstrate that the Poetry Method shows results well above natural expected improvement with beginner remedial readers.

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Plosives:Definition of sounds:

- "b" lips press together and pop apart letting out VOICE.
- "p" same as "b" without voice.
- "d" tip of tongue pushes against teeth ridge, flaps down letting out VOICE.
- "t" same as "d" without voice.

Nasal sounds:

- "n" tip of tongue on hard palate VOICE goes around mouth and out through nose.
- "m" lips together, VOICE goes around mouth and out of nose
- "ng" back of tongue touches soft palate and VOICE is forced through nose.
- "th" as in this lips apart and tip of tongue sticks out between top and bottom teeth VOICE forced out.
- "th" as in think same as th without voice.
- "g" back of tongue presses against soft palate letting out voice.
- "k" same as "g" without voice.
- "w" purse lips let air out.
- "wh" purse lips forward and force air out. - you should be able to feel the wind on your hand.
- "qu" this is made by saying k and w together - kw

Sibilants:-

- "s" teeth together, tongue just behind teeth, air pushed out
- "sh" teeth together, tongue flattened, air forced through.

Fricatives:

- "v" top teeth rest on lower lip VOICE forced out.
- "f" same as "v" without voice.

DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION—CAPE OF GOOD HOPE  
ONE-MINUTE READING TEST

is	me	on	at	by	so	us	7
an	it	or	be	to	as	he	14
of	in	go	up	am	if	no	21
we	my	ox	do	the	and	for	28
but	him	are	can	she	dog	let	35
you	not	was	out	try	see	mix	42
cat	now	boy	saw	bit	met	top	49
run	man	pet	lot	get	dig	van	56
bad	red	cup	bee	lit	pin	had	63
ran	pen	nut	big	old	yet	rob	70
gun	leg	fun	lip	new	fog	has	77
sit	sly	wig	mud	box	ink	sat	84
end	cut	pay	fed	who	six	lad	91
met	dry	cow	his	peg	tin	say	98
eat	any	far	set	bud	kid	pup	105
fox	ask	egg	cab	ill	use	jam	112
all	pit	got	sad	tea	sky	one	119
yes	fur	act	toe	her	own	ten	126
arm	rock	gone	feel	that	rich		132
till	long	flat	this	part	foot		138
maid	upon	came	mile	back			143
sand	time	said	then	wall			148
into	were	done	walk	much			153
loss	seen	went	with	come			158

Mc Nally and Murray 1968

ate	an	as	ask	any
black	blue	begin	before	best
call	could	cold	carry	clean
drink	every	does	done	find
if	from	fast	fall	going
must	help	gave	news	just
soon	may	its	say	let
too	stop	many	that	old
wish	this	tell	well	please
yet	under	white	warm	side
always	around	ahead	again	able
belong	better	bring	brown	both
cut	eat	city	don't	called
funny	fly	first	found	enough
how	into	goes	green	far
live	know	long	light	hot
open	once	much	myself	never
ran	some	over	round	only
take	thank	so	sing	red
would	together	which	use	sit
about	front	believe	between	board
full	group	brought	change	early
grow	light	company	eyes	hurt
hold	off	different	face	rescue
island	or	heard	laugh	show
keep	pull	idea	meant	start
pick	ride	own	right	leave
shall	small	parent	their	those
ten	try	these	them	then
think	yellow	wash	us	upon

# BASIC SIGHT WORDS

Mc Nally and Murray 1968.

## Johnson's First-Grade Words

a	car	God	it	my
above	children	going	its	
across	come	gone	it's	name
after	could	good		never
again		got	just	new
air	day			night
all	days	had	keep	no
am	did	hand	kind	not
Africa	didn't	hard		now
and	do	has	let	
are	don't	have	like	off
art	door	he	little	old
as	down	help	look	one
ask		her	love	open
at	end	here		or
		high	make	out
back	feet	him	making	over
be	find	his	man	
before	first	home	may	past
behind	five	house	me	play
big	for	how	men	point
black	four		miss	put
book		I	money	
boy	gave	if	more	really
but	get	I'm	most	red
	girl	in	mother	right
came	give	into	Mr	room
can	go	is	must	run

KEY WORDS FOR GOOD READING

1.	up	is	I	in	of
2.	on	it	as	a	so
3.	well	an	we	all	are
4.	for	if	from	or	off
5.	let	got	long	girl	give
6.	not	into	one	only	our
7.	has	this	her	their	here
8.	did	go	blue	bird	do
9.	tell	too	eat	tree	take
10.	old	put	open	play	over
11.	bad	best	been	back	bring
12.	fast	far	live	find	five
13.	sit	stop	said	she	sing
14.	hand	help	house	head	home
15.	must	me	made	much	make
16.	jump	just	know	keep	next
17.	red	ran	room	round	read
18.	went	wish	who	white	which
19.	then	there	thing	these	three
20.	after	again	always	about	another

---

21.	to	the	but	and	us
22.	he	my	big	they	man
23.	by	be	out	at	ask
24.	you	boy	saw	day	dog
25.	once	own	him	no	now
26.	was	right	new	with	run
27.	how	have	left	his	had
28.	any	down	good	don't	away
29.	little	look	Mr.	last	like
30.	green	going	fell	gave	get
31.	many	more	soon	men	many
32.	four	found	yes	fly	first
33.	some	say	when	sat	see
34.	your	other	than	under	every
35.	want	walk	came	why	will
36.	two	think	before	time	then
37.	could	call	year	can	come
38.	mother	because	where	father	black
39.	work	never	that	were	very
40.	school	should	am	would	what

The above are the 200 most commonly used words in English. To be a good reader a child must learn to recognise all these words at a glance. Then he will be able to read more quickly.

Some children find the second group of words (21-40) more difficult than the first group. Time children as they read the words from each group. Their times should be nearly the same if they are a good reader.

DOLCH SIGHT PHRASES

(Made from the 95 Commonest Nouns and the Basic Sight Vocabulary)

- |                         |                     |                       |
|-------------------------|---------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. from home            | 49. your sister     | 97. was found         |
| 2. I will go            | 50. a pretty home   | 98. we were           |
| 3. the little children  | 51. could eat       | 99. up here           |
| 4. will look            | 52. when you know   | 100. his brother      |
| 5. You are              | 53. if you wish     | 101. I may go         |
| 6. all night            | 54. you will do     | 102. to the school    |
| 7. her father           | 55. down the hill   | 103. will walk        |
| 8. the red apple        | 56. did not go      | 104. on the chair     |
| 9. in the garden        | 57. for him         | 105. so long          |
| 10. what I say          | 58. at home         | 106. the new doll     |
| 11. the little chickens | 59. the white duck  | 107. could make       |
| 1. will think           | 60. would like      | 108. he would go      |
| 13. you were            | 61. if I must       | 109. when you come    |
| 14. all day             | 62. I will come     | 110. to the barn      |
| 15. her mother          | 63. to the nest     | 111. was made         |
| 16. the red cow         | 64. will go         | 112. in the box       |
| 17. about him           | 65. for them        | 113. to go            |
| 18. as he said          | 66. at school       | 114. the funny rabbit |
| 19. did not fall        | 67. the white sheep | 115. a big house      |
| 20. can play            | 68. would want      | 116. when I wish      |
| 21. it is               | 69. if I may        | 117. you will like    |
| 22. with mother         | 70. then he said    | 118. in the grass     |
| 23. has found           | 71. in the water    | 119. must be          |
| 24. soft bread          | 72. must go         | 120. in the window    |
| 25. a new hat           | 73. on the floor    | 121. to stop          |
| 26. down the street     | 74. so much         | 122. the funny man    |
| 27. for the girl        | 75. the new coat    | 123. is going         |
| 28. then he came        | 76. the black horse | 124. can live         |
| 29. the little dog      | 77. about it        | 125. it was           |
| 30. went down           | 78. what I want     | 126. with us          |
| 31. I am                | 79. when I can      | 127. has made         |
| 32. too soon            | 80. the yellow ball | 128. the black bird   |
| 33. my brother          | 81. has run away    | 129. by the house     |
| 34. a pretty picture    | 82. he was          | 130. if you can       |
| 35. for the baby        | 83. up there        | 131. can run          |
| 36. I may get           | 84. your mother     | 132. from the tree    |
| 37. the little pig      | 85. a big horse     | 133. they are         |
| 38. is coming           | 86. to the house    | 134. at once          |
| 39. I was               | 87. he would try    | 135. will buy         |
| 40. too little          | 88. the old man     | 136. the small boat   |
| 41. my father           | 89. went away       | 137. in the barn      |
| 42. a new book          | 90. we are          | 138. as I said        |
| 43. by the tree         | 91. down here       | 139. can fly          |
| 44. as I do             | 92. his sister      | 140. to the farm      |
| 45. the yellow cat      | 93. some cake       | 141. they were        |
| 46. has come back       | 94. from the farm   | 142. at three         |
| 47. he is               | 95. as he did       | 143. will read        |
| 48. down there          | 96. the old man     | 144. the small boy    |

Instant Words

Group 1

1. the
2. a
3. is
4. you
5. to
6. and
7. we
8. that
9. in
10. not
11. for
12. at
13. with
14. it
15. on
16. can
17. will
18. are
19. of
20. this
21. your
22. as
23. but
24. be
25. have

Group 2

1. he
2. I
3. they
4. one
5. good
6. me
7. about
8. had
9. if
10. some
11. up
12. her
13. do
14. when
15. so
16. my
17. very
18. all
19. would
20. any
21. been
22. out

23. there
24. from
25. day

Group 3

1. go
2. see
3. them
4. us
5. no
6. him
7. by
8. was
9. come
10. get
11. or
12. two
13. man
14. little
15. has
16. then
17. how
18. like
19. our
20. what
21. know
22. make
23. which
24. much
25. his

Group 4

1. who
2. an
3. their
4. she
5. new
6. said
7. did
8. boy
9. three
10. down
11. work
12. put
13. were
14. before
15. just
16. long
17. here
18. other

19. our
20. what
21. know
22. make
23. which
24. much
25. his

Group 4

1. who
2. an
3. their
4. she
5. new
6. said
7. did
8. boy
9. three
10. down
11. work
12. put
13. were
14. before
15. just
16. long
17. here
18. other
19. old
20. take
21. eat
22. again
23. give
24. after
25. many

Group 5

1. saw
2. home
3. soon
4. stand
5. box
6. upon
7. first
8. came
9. girl
10. house
11. find
12. back
13. because
14. made

15. could
16. book
17. look
18. mother
19. run
20. school
21. people
22. night
23. into
24. say
25. think

Group 6

1. big
2. where
3. am
4. ball
5. morning
6. live
7. four
8. last
9. colour
10. away
11. red
12. friend
13. pretty
14. eat
15. want
16. year
17. white
18. got
19. play
20. found
21. left
22. men
23. bring
24. wish
25. black

Group 7

1. may
2. let
3. use
4. these
5. right
6. present
7. tell
8. next
9. please
10. leave

## SPELLING LIST

Instant Words (cont)

<u>Group 7</u>	18. must	<u>Group 10</u>
11. hand	19. high	1. hat
12. more	20. far	2. car
13. why	21. both	3. write
14. better	22. end	4. try
15. under	23. also	5. myself
16. while	24. until	6. longer
17. should	25. call	7. those
18. never	<u>Group 9</u>	8. hold
19. each	1. ask	9. full
20. best	2. small	10. carry
21. another	3. yellow	11. sight
22. seem	4. show	12. sing
23. tree	5. goes	13. warm
24. name	6. clean	14. sit
25. dear	7. buy	15. dog
<u>Group 8</u>	8. thank	16. ride
1. ran	9. sleep	17. hot
2. five	10. letter	18. grow
3. read	11. jump	19. cut
4. over	12. help	20. seven
5. such	13. fly	21. woman
6. way	14. don't	22. funny
7. too	15. fast	23. yes
8. shall	16. cold	24. ate
9. own	17. today	25. stop
10. most	18. does	
11. sure	19. face	
12. thing	20. green	
13. only	21. every	
14. near	22. brown	
15. than	23. coat	
16. open	24. six	
17. kind	25. gave	

Group II

off	sister	happy	once	didn't	
set	round	dress	fall	wash	
start	always	anything	around	close	
walk	walk	money	turn	might	
hard	along	bed	fine	sat	hope

Ask my sister to tell the woman not to sit on anything today that will brown her clean yellow dress fresh from the wash.

Yes, I sat on the hard round bed, which could hold myself and eight others.

These words continue to Group 25, i.e. 625 words.

Copy of the letter sent to  
parents and pupils.

## Claudia Donaldson-Selby

B. Ed. (Remedial) L.T.C.L. (Sp. & Drama)

Remedial Therapist

Phone 45-1502

2 Berkley Street  
Oranjezicht  
Cape Town  
8001

12<sup>th</sup> Sept. 1986

Dear Mr. + Mrs Braude + Nils,

Hello! Its been some time since the days of remedial lessons. I wonder if I would recognize you?

Nils, your results, when you were retested before leaving me were good enough to enter into a study on the use of 'poetry' in remediation. This study will help other children struggling with reading.

Please will you all help by filling in the enclosed forms for parents + pupils!

I am most interested in reading your remarks + for statistical analysis I would appreciate your answering everything you can.

If you are ever in Cape Town why not phone me with your news?

Best wishes + thanks for your trouble,

Claudia D-Selby.

P.S. Please use the enclosed envelope + return the questionnaires as soon as possible.



## Parent's Questionnaire ctd.

12. How was this homework done ?

in small chunks : all in one go : it wasn't : you were not  
during the week : done : aware

13. What were your feelings regarding the homework ?

there should not : there was not : there was sufficient  
have been any : enough : to keep contact until  
the next lesson.

Comments :

---



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### READING

14. Is your child reading and choosing books on his/her own now ?

use library ?

YES NO

15. Does he display any of the following in his reading ? ring as many as you like.

more interest : more expression : better : understanding of  
comprehension : what he/she reads

### RESULTS

16. Does your child still have a problem in any of these area ? Ring those operable.

writing : spelling : reading : vocabulary : comprehension : perceptual work  
(understanding) (visual)

17. Has your child ever needed further remedial help, either privately or at school ? ring those operable.

YES : privately : NO  
at school

18. Would you buy the forty weeks' poetry and spelling programme for your child ?

YES NO

If yes : (a) to recap what was taught  
(b) to carry on to the next level.

*Hello!* CHILDREN'S QUESTIONNAIRE ON THE POETRY METHOD *to lessons please*

Please ring the answer that you want to choose. You can write *fill* comments if you want to. *This in!*

NAME: .....

APPENDIX X1

AGE in years and months .....

CLASS AT SCHOOL: .....

QUESTIONS:

When you came to remedial lessons

1. What did you like best about each lesson?:- ( ring one )

The poetry                      The spelling                      The phonics                      The books for  
work book                      reading

2. What didn't you like?

The poetry                      The spelling                      The phonics                      The books for  
reading

3. Do you like poetry now?

YES or NO ?

4. Do you remember any of the poems from remedial lessons?  
If so write their names, or the first line:

.....  
.....  
.....

5. Have you ever read poems just for fun since you have  
stopped remedial lessons?

YES or NO ?

6. Has spelling become easier for you?

YES or NO ?

7. Besides the books that school gives you to read do you  
ever choose your own books to read just for fun?

YES or NO ?

8. Would you have liked your own book with copies of the  
remedial poems and spelling in it?

YES or NO ?

9. Do you enjoy reading now?

YES or NO ?

10. Do you use the library?

YES or NO ?

*Thank you! Claudia D. Solbu*

YOUR NAME : \_\_\_\_\_

AGE OF PUPIL :      Years      months      CLASS :      SEX:

Q U E S T I O N N A I R E  
ON POETRY METHOD FOR TEACHERS

(Please ring choice and write any remarks you would like.)

PRE-USE

1. Do you think that you were adequately prepared before going out and using this method ?  

	YES	NO
--	-----	----
2. Was the programme adequate to cover all your needs for the child once you had discovered these by testing and diagnosis ?  

	YES	NO
--	-----	----
3. If the programme was not adequate, ring the sub-programmes needed :  
Handwriting : perceptual : arithmetic : speed reading : training  
Anything else : \_\_\_\_\_
4. How was the level of the play for your pupil ?  
too easy : just right : too difficult

USABILITY

5. How did you teach each "week" of the programme ?  
Two x  $\frac{1}{2}$  hours a week : three-quarters of an hour a week : one hour a week : other(enlarge)
  6. Are the phonics books and readers to be used as adjuncts to the programme, easily available?  

	YES	NO
--	-----	----
  7. How would you have liked to receive the programme ?  
as a teacher's handbook and workbook for the pupil including poems and spelling : as teachers' handbook and poems and spelling : teacher's own choice : given the idea then free choice in method, lay out and resources
  8. Were the instructions and format of the programme clear ?  
Remarks :  

	YES	NO
--	-----	----
- 
9. Would you prefer the spelling and poems -  
to be clearly printed in teacher's writing : to be typewritten
  - 10 Did you think illustrations would have added to the interest ?  
Remarks :  

	YES	NO
--	-----	----
-

- |  |     |    |
|--|-----|----|
| 11. Did you find that the programme was repetitious ?                          | YES | NO |
| 12. Did you or your pupil mind that it was similar in format week after week ? | YES | NO |

Remarks : \_\_\_\_\_

13. If your answer to the above was NO ring the reason/s

the child finds the routine of a basic structure a security	:	the teacher likes the reassurance of a basic structure	:	from the basic structure there is space to improvise
---	---	--	---	--

14. If your answer to No. 12 was YES, have you ever tried to vary the programme in any of the following ways (ring your choices)

used own initiative and found own poems	:	shared ideas with the pupil on own experiences inspired by the poems	:	changed the order of the programme	:	spent less time on one section and more on another
---	---	--	---	------------------------------------	---	--

15. What unforeseen problems arose during the use of the programme ?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

16. Did you :
- (a) always read the poem first before the child ?
  - (b) allow the child to sight read the poem ?
  - (c) read the poem together with the poem on first reading ?
  - (d) vary your approach with every poem ?

- |   |     |    |
|---|-----|----|
| 17. Did you act out the poems ?<br>Or get the child to act them ? | YES | NO |
| 18. Did you tape the reading of the poems ?                       | YES | NO |
| 19. Did your pupil ever bring you any poems ?                     | YES | NO |
| 20. What is your favourite poem from the method ?                 |     |    |

21. What is/are your least favourite poems ?
- \_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_

### SPELLING

22. On the first day of presentation of the spelling words did your pupils ?
- |                   |   |                     |   |                                       |
|-------------------|---|---------------------|---|---------------------------------------|
| read you the list | : | write those he knew | : | read the list and write those he knew |
|-------------------|---|---------------------|---|---------------------------------------|

23. To learn at home - did you give the child :

the whole list as in the programme	:	just the words he didn't know how to write	:	the list from the programme and extra corrections
------------------------------------	---	--	---	---

24. When he/she had written his/her spelling/dictation - Did you :  
 correct work : let the child write : correct work  
 immediately : down the correct word : at the end of the  
 yourself : above his mistake or : lesson  
 in his "dictionary"
25. By week ten - Could you  
 see an obvious : see no change : see more and more  
 improvement in the : : mistakes cropping  
 spelling : up
26. After re-testing ? Was there  
 a noticeable change : a change only : no change  
 in his/her spelling : noticeable on the :  
 standardized test result
27. Do you have any remarks on the spelling ?
- 

HOMEWORK

28. Did you give homework as was part of the programme ? YES NO
29. Was the homework done each week ? YES NO
30. Were there any complaints about the homework ? YES NO
31. If there were, by whom were these complaints made ?  
 the pupil : the parents : the class teacher : the headmistress  
 the headmaster
32. Did the homework make your programme go any faster? YES NO
33. Do you think that your pupil benefited by having to do homework ? YES NO
- Remarks :
- 

RESULTS

34. Did you notice an improvement in your child before re-testing in any of the following - ring those operative.  
 oral reading : vocabulary : comprehension : spelling : nothing
35. What did re-testing show the child had improved in :  
 oral reading : vocabulary : comprehension : spelling : nothing
36. Do you think that the reward system motivated your pupil(s)  
 YES NO  
 Remarks :
- 
37. Was it useful knowing your whole programme from the beginning ? YES NO
38. Would you buy the "Weekly to Strength" Poetry/phonics programme if it were available ? If so which one/ones ?  
 Book 1 : Reading age : Book 2 : R. A 8½ yrs : Book 3 : R.A. 10 years  
 Beginner to literacy : to 10 years : to 13 years
39. What do you think this method is lacking ?
40. What did you like about the Poetry Method ? (Use reverse side of paper for your answer)

## Claudia Donaldson-Selby

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Dear

Thank you very much for responding to the questionnaires on the POETRY METHOD.

Even though it may be years since you were part of the programme your answers hold statistical worth, and will help change the programme to make it more workable.

I am most grateful.

Yours sincerely,

Claudia Donaldson-Selby