

Educators Said To Be Having More Trouble Than Ever With Undeveloped Readers

Atlantic City, N.J.—(U.P.)—Educators claim that today's methods of teaching are the best ever devised, but they admit that schools are having more trouble with poor readers than ever before.

The United Press asked five of the nation's top reading experts to explain this paradox, which has become a major source of concern to parents. The experts are attending the annual convention of the American Association of School Administrators.

Symposium Participants
Participating in the symposium were Dr. William S. Gray, professor of education, University of Chicago; Nils Banton Smith, professor of education, New York University; Arthur I. Gates, professor of education, Columbia University Teachers

College; Mary C. Austin, of the Harvard University school of education; Russell G. Stauffer, director of reading study center, University of Delaware.

All of the authorities agreed on these points:

—Poor reading has become one of our most acute educational problems. Millions of children—estimates of the number range from 10 to 25 per cent of total school enrollment—are now classed as "retarded readers." There are many students now in high school who can't read at the fifth grade level.

—Teaching methods cannot be blamed for this situation. Today's teachers use a combination of the best reading instruction techniques developed in the past, including phonics and a variety of visual word-identification systems. Repeated exper-

iments have proved that this approach produces far superior results to phonics alone or any other "old method" when both are used on children of comparable intelligence.

No More Flunking

—Compulsory education laws and liberal promotion policies are mainly responsible for the fact that so many poor readers are turning up in the higher grades of public schools. A generation ago, children who didn't learn to read in the first grade were unceremoniously "flunked" and required to repeat the grade. After a couple of failures, many children of low reading ability simply quit school.

Now the United States is committed to a policy that every child—bright, average or well-below average in learning ability—must get an education. The

poor readers are staying in school instead of dropping out. They are being promoted despite their reading deficiencies because psychologists and educators agree that on balance it is better for a child to stay as long as possible, even if he requires a good deal of "remedial" instruction to keep up.

—The tensions of modern life, which have sharply increased the number of adult neurotics, also are affecting children. Homes broken by divorce, working mothers, pressure from parents to "succeed," particularly in reading—these and many other circumstances of the modern home environment tend to create emotional difficulties in children which inhibit their ability to learn.

Environment Important
Dr. Gates laid particular emphasis on family environment as a cause of reading difficulty. "Millions of modern children are suffering from linguistic starvation," he said.

"When they get home from school, they find mother still at work, so they play in the streets. When their parents do come home everybody watches television. There are no books in the house—nobody thinks of reading as a leisure-time activity."

"If Johnny's parents never read why should Johnny care about learning to read?" True enough, said Drs. Gray and Smith, but these same non-reading parents often are the most insistent in their demands that Johnny "do well in reading" at school.

"They know, from their own experience, what a handicap inadequate reading ability can be in modern life," said Gray. They are eager for Johnny to be better prepared, so they constantly make an issue out of his reading progress.
This tends to set up a "lean-impulse wrongly directed."

Many Schools Adopt New Reading Method As Aid To Problem

Atlantic City, N.J.—(U.P.)—Every child learns to read in his own way and at his own pace. Some become fluent readers in the first grade. Others need many years of painstaking instruction to master the essential part of modern civilization.

How rapidly a child learns to read is not necessarily an index to his general intelligence. Emotional maturity, ability to perceive fine distinctions in sounds and shapes, and other developmental factors profoundly affect reading ability.

There are the basic concepts of a new approach to reading which is being adopted by many schools. Experts believe it will sharply reduce the "poor reader" problem which has become the number one headache of American education at all levels.

Discuss New Approach
The new approach, which has been a major topic of discussion among the 19,000 school superintendents here for the 83rd annual convention of the American Association of School Administrators, calls for sweeping changes in some traditional ideas.

It repudiates, for example, the long-honored notion that reading is a "beginner" subject which should be taught only in the elementary grades. Virtually all authorities now believe that reading courses should continue to be a major part of the curriculum right through high school.

Emphasis is also being put on the fact that every teacher shares the responsibility of teaching a child to read, and reading improvements should be a goal of every school course, whether in literature, science or even mathematics.

Some Use 'Ungraded' System
Another long established educational custom which is being re-examined, and in many areas abandoned, is the rigid division of primary schools into first, second and third grades. In an effort to let each child progress in reading at his own best pace,

without hemming him in with arbitrary "norms" for a year's achievement, some schools are turning to an "ungraded primary" system.

Under this plan, grade designations for the first three grades are dropped, and a child is allowed to move at his own speed through a series of "reading levels" until he reaches the level set for completion of the third grade.

If it takes him four years or more to do this, he is spared the psychological blow—and the unnecessary repetition of subject matter he has mastered—which results from the old system of forcing him to repeat a particular grade.

New York Girl Wins Pie Baking Contest

Chicago—(U.P.)—A blonde, 17-year-old girl from Henrietta, N. Y., has an appropriate present for President Eisenhower on George Washington's birthday—the best cherry pie in the nation.

Mary Ann Bartholomew was named the best cherry pie baker in the 48 states, Alaska, Hawaii and Canada Thursday at the "silver jubilee" national cherry pie baking contest here.

Her victory over 51 girls in the national championship won her a \$500 scholarship, a trip to New York and the honor of presenting her prize creation to President Eisenhower in Washington.

State Office Building At Eugene Considered

Salem—(U.P.)—Sen. Al Corbett, Portland Democrat, said yesterday that his subcommittee of the Joint Ways and Means committee is studying a proposal to build a state office building at Eugene with borrowed funds.

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Lindbergh Now Little Recognized 30 Years After Famed Solo Flight

New York—(U.P.)—A tall, nice-looking man in his 50s, wearing old-fashioned high top shoes, strolled down Fifth ave. one day not long ago. No one recognized him or paid him the slightest heed.

Thirty years ago this city went into hysteria at the sight of the same man. They massed the streets five million strong, shouted themselves weak and gave him the greatest hero's acclaim in ticker-tape history.

The man was Charles A. Lindbergh. His anonymity was the success of an almost fanatic effort to escape the public gaze. This is a year of anniversaries for Lindbergh. It was in 1927 that he flew alone to Paris and the adulation of the world. And it was 25 years ago this March 1 that his first-born was kidnapped and killed.

Wall Around Family
He put a wall around himself and his family after that. The wall is still there and those of his friends whose careless talk puts a chink in it find Lindbergh chill and angry. But enough can be pieced together to get a picture of Lindbergh today.

The movie, "Spirit Of St. Louis" based on his book, is soon to be released. He looked in on its making occasionally, mainly to make sure it was absolutely authentic, and had a chance to rehash old times with H. A. (Bud) Gurney, a United Airlines pilot.

Stunting Friends
It is interesting to talk with Gurney. He knew Lindbergh when they were both fresh kids, barnstorming and stunting over cow-pasture airports in the Midwest. He still calls him "Slim" without a trace of affectation and is surprised that people find Lindbergh taciturn.

"Gosh, we went out one day

last year at the picture location," Gurney recalls, "and there were sitting two of those old standard biplanes, with the struts and wire and all. Slim looked at me and said, 'Let's go.'"

"I said, 'Okay, you get in front and I'll get in back.' I was thinking maybe I better be on the dual controls—after all, it's something to fly a plane like that after all these years.

"Well, he read my mind, just like he always did. He said, 'Oh, no. You take this one and I'll take that one.' Well, we took off and flew along together for about five minutes. Neither of us said anything. We didn't have to."

That is one glimpse of Lindbergh. The brass at Boeing Aircraft got another of a brilliant engineer and businessman testing their new 707 jet passenger plane for Pan American. He is one of the few who has flown it.

Busy at Pentagon
Lindbergh is often seen at the Pentagon. His work is known to deal with advanced types of military aircraft and guided missiles. President Eisenhower promoted him to the rank of brigadier general in 1954.

Not many people know that Lindbergh shot down at least one, perhaps three, Japanese planes in World War II as a civilian technician advising Pacific pilots on getting the most from their planes. He went into that role after resigning his colonel's commission. His resignation followed his criticism of President Roosevelt's foreign policy as leading toward war.

Lindbergh lives now in a big English-style stone house in Darien, Conn., on Long Island Sound. It is on a private road where residents pay for their own policemen. The Lindberghs have a green Cadillac and a Ford station wagon. Their servants do the shopping and they are seldom seen in the small town.

He and his wife, Anne, had five children in addition to Charles Jr. They are Jon, married and a Navy officer in San Diego; Land, a student at Stanford; and three younger children who attend the Darien public schools, Anne, 18, Scott,

Searchers Find Body Of Navy Jet Pilot

Hertford, N. C.—(U.P.)—Searchers Thursday night found the body of a Navy jet pilot who bailed out of his plane shortly before it crashed into a garage near a school where 500 children were in classes. His parachute failed to open.

The Navy identified the pilot as Ensign William W. Bell of Longton, Kan. One of the two school bus mechanics working in the garage, J. Van Roach, 57, died Thursday night of burns he received when the F3H Demon jet crashed into the building.

Searchers found Bell's body on a farm about four miles southeast of here. The second garage mechanic, Preston Morgan, 28, was in critical condition but was expected to live.

Seaton Treated for Sciatic Condition

Honolulu—(U.P.)—Secretary of the Interior Fred Seaton underwent treatment in Tripler Army Hospital yesterday for a sciatic condition that forced him to cancel his several official appointments.

Doctors said Seaton will be hospitalized "at least two or three days." They said his condition is not serious.

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